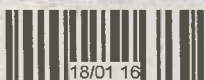


SOCCER

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GST INCLUSIVE

Leo Scoops Cash

By
John Economos

LEO CARLE, Marconi's dynamic ball-playing playmaker, despite his team's last minute 2-3 loss last Saturday night at the Marconi Stadium against the resilient visiting Sydney United, was still voted 'Man Of The Match' in leg one of an exciting Capitol Hill Cup clash.

Despite having taken off a full year from Soccer, and then recently returned from some trials in Belgium, the 24 year old Leo operating in tandem in midfield with younger brother Nick, turned on a scintillating display of silky skills that left United grappling to contain.

Towards the end of the first session, the 'brothers Carle combination' ignited with electrifying movements of flicks, first time touches and volleys that left the crowd mesmerised.

Amazing stuff, highly-charged entertainment that one was left thinking he was momentarily witnessing two lethal Brazilian Internationals that had intruded into the Marconi midfield.

Leo set up Marconi's first goal whilst Nick scored the second.

Leo also greatly troubled United with his dazzling in and outswinging free-kicks.

A syndicated group of Sydney businessmen which included Terry Leckie of 'balmain (nb)', Paul Comin of Combell Pty Ltd and Mr Dino Seraglio Capitol Hill

Estates, combined to put up a cash-box of prizes.

This includes \$10,000 to go to the overall winner over the two matches that Marconi and Sydney United play between themselves in the NSW Premier League, with the loser collecting \$5,000.

Adding further spice to encourage open, attacking Soccer, the collective sponsors had agreed to pay-out an additional cash bonus of \$500 for each goal scored.

As well, Combell Pty Ltd sponsored three cash prizes for each match, with the recipients being voted on a 3-2-1 basis.

Leo Carle during his 12 month self-imposed exile from playing, ironically managed to also shed an amazing 20 kilos that has now left him far more lithe to execute his

electrifying silky flicks and touches.

Four years ago, it was none other than Leo Carle that came storming home with a stack of votes he had polled to snatch the NSW Gold Medal award.

Runner-up to Carle last Saturday night in the cash awards was Sydney United's powerfully built, but agile custodian, Liam Reddy with third prize winner being Marconi's lateral defender Luke Casserly.

The annually staged Capitol Hill Estate Cup holders are Marconi, but with Sydney United now having won the 'away leg', the Cup could this year change address.

Full match report inside in the Soccer-NSW Section.



ABSW's John Economos with 'Man Of The Match' Leo Carle.

Trimboli Calls Time on South Career



Ernie Merrick under the Spotlight



Page 17

Sydney Olympic Crisis



Page 6

Sydney United win Western Sydney clash



Sydney United fans could not hide their smiles after their side defeated rivals Marconi Stallions which extended their lead in the NSW Premier League

8

Page NSW Liftout

● Inside this week's NSW Premier League section are detailed reports on Round seven including the incredible 41 goals scored, along with all the round's match reports and news items

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PRIOR to issue date.**

Adelaide United target Scott
Tunbridge was hospitalized
after Hamilton Academical's
recent clash with St Johnstone in
the Scottish Division One.

Tunbridge fell heavily in the
box late in the game and was
stretchered from the field. He
was sent to hospital as a precau-
tionary measure.

Meanwhile fellow Adelaide
boy Ian Fyfe has continued his
run of good form with Hamilton.
Fyfe has become a regular fix-
ture in the Hamilton defence.

★ ★ ★ ★

Les Pogliacomi was delighted
to play his part in Oldham
Athletic's FA Cup shock over
Premiership giants Manchester
City on Saturday.

The Aussie goalkeeper kept a
clean-sheet with a string of
superb saves as the Latics
stunned City 1-0 at Boundary
Park.

Pogliacomi said: "I've worked
in a bottle shop, in a McDonald's
distribution warehouse, the lot.

"So I know what it's like on
the other side. That's why I re-
ally appreciate what I do - days
like this just make it even more
special.

"I still think it's fantastic,
being paid to be a professional.
In Australia I would pick up
whatever work I could, as well
as playing, usually through con-
nections from team-mates.

"I had won the Grand Final
with Parramatta Power, but the
league was going pear-shaped in
Australia at the time.

"I don't want to sound pig-
headed or arrogant, but I had my
heart and mind set on coming to
England that summer and I've
been here for two- and-a-half
years now.

"I actually compiled a video
myself of my performances and
my agent sent it over to Oldham.
Iain Dowie was assistant at the
time, but he liked what he saw
and got me over for a two-week
trial.

"Iain tried to get me to Crystal
Palace last January, when he
took over, but although the clubs
agreed, things didn't work out
and I came back before anything
was signed."

★ ★ ★ ★

Victorian central defender
Chris Moore has transferred
from Gravesend & Northfleet to
Welling United in the English
non-league.

32 year-old Moore was
Gravesend's player of the season
last season and spent two sea-
sons there, amassing 57 games
and 10 goals.

★ ★ ★ ★

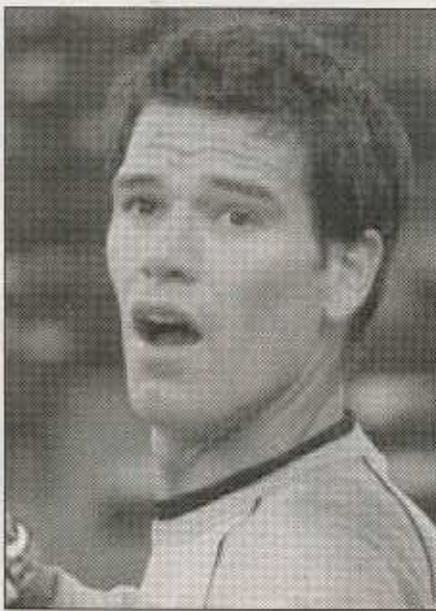
Middlesbrough manager
Steve McClaren has
blamed the crowded Premier
League fixture list as a major
reason for Mark Viduka's serious
hamstring injury.

Viduka will be sidelined for
January with the injury prompt-
ing McClaren to say, "I suppose
it had been coming on, but if you
play four games in 10 days it is
bound to have an effect on play-
ers.

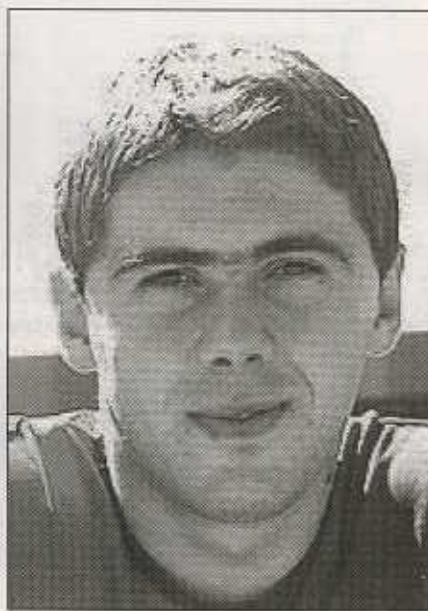
"Before Mark got injured, he
had played every game for us -
and maybe a bit of fatigue
caused his problems. These

aussiesabroad

BY Mark Stavroulakis & Daniel Kuziow



**Les Pogliacomi: Oldham FC's Australian
keeper was delighted with his side's
memorable FA Cup victory over English
Premier League side Manchester City**



**Ivan Ergic: FC Basel fans cannot
wait for the return of the Australian
midfielder**

things are sent as a sign really.

"It is a bit worrying because
we cannot do without Mark
Viduka in this team. We are
more of a threat when he is play-
ing; we score more goals when
he is playing, so it is bound to
make us a bit weaker in that
department. But it is just a tear
and it will recover."

★ ★ ★ ★

He may not have turned out
for FC Basel in over two
years but Ivan Ergic is still very
much in the hearts and minds of
the club's loyal supporters.

The club's official website
recently asked fans what topped
their 'wish list' for 2005 with
many opting for success in the
Swiss league and cup competi-
tions as well as in Europe.
However, the surprise response
was the large number of fans
who wanted to see the return of
22-year old Ergic from long-
term injury and illness.

It's been a nightmare past cou-
ple of years for the talented mid-
fielder. Shortly after featuring in
the November 2002 Champions
League clash with Manchester
United Ergic was sidelined by a
troublesome groin injury which
required two operations to recti-
fy.

Then, just as he was nearing
full fitness, Ergic was struck
down by glandular fever which
further delayed his comeback
plans. He returned to light train-
ing in the middle of last year but
is yet to pull on Basel colours in
a competitive setting.

Born in Yugoslavia, Ergic
gained West Australian Under-
16 representative honours before
accepting a scholarship at the
Australian Institute of Sport.
Upon graduating he signed with
Perth Glory and would make 32
appearances and score ten goals
during the 1999/2000 season in
which he was crowned the
national league's Under-21
Player of the Year.

Ergic joined Italian giants
Juventus in June 2000 and was
immediately loaned to Basel
where he quickly established
himself as a first team regular,

playing 65 times and netting
twelve goals before being struck
down.

★ ★ ★ ★

Parma midfielder Vince Grella
is being linked with Brescia.

Brescia have approached
Parma about several of their
players and are offering young
midfielder Abderazak Jadid in
exchange.

Parma have indicated the only
first teamer they'd be prepared to
part for 20 year-old Jadid is
Australia international Grella,
who was taken off with Parma
1-0 down against Juventus on
Thursday before his replace-
ment, Marcio Marchionni,
nicked a late equaliser.

Cagliari and Blackburn
Rovers have also been linked
with Grella since the winter mar-
ket opened.

★ ★ ★ ★

Aussie midfielder Marco
Maisano has confirmed he
will be leaving Morton at the
end of this season.

The 23 year-old was informed
by manager Jim McInally over
Christmas that he wouldn't be
offered new terms, with his cur-
rent deal expiring in the summer.

"It didn't come as a shock,"
Maisano admitted to tribfoot-
ball.com.

"I knew the manager was
looking to change things and
obviously I'm one of the players
he feels he can move on.

"I have no complaints. I'm
just trying to do my best for the
club and help them win promo-
tion."

Maisano was drafted in just
after Christmas and scored a
superb goal in the 2-2 draw at
Berwick, but was immediately
dropped for the next game.

"All I can do is keep my head
up and prepare myself in case
I'm needed again." Maisano
insists he will only have good
memories from his time at
Morton.

"It's been an incredible ride.
I've had five managers, experi-
enced relegation, then a champi-

onship. I've fallen in and out of
love with the fans - and we've
enjoyed some great wins togeth-
er against St Mirren!"

★ ★ ★ ★

Hartlepool striker Joel Porter
has earned the plaudits of
his teammates following a
superb performance in Pool's 5-0
victory against MK Dons recent-
ly.

Porter scored the fourth goal
in this game after knocking in
his own penalty rebound and
Pool midfielder Anthony
Sweeney said of Porter's game,

"He terrorises defences and
he deserved his goal - he was a
bit lucky with the penalty but he
was there to put it away.

"We had to pass the ball
sharply and try and break them
down because they played
defensively being away from
home and struggling a little.

"But once we got the ball
down and played I thought we
tore them apart on a few occa-
sions."

★ ★ ★ ★

Qantas Socceroo goalkeeper
Mark Schwarzer has hit
back at claims made in several
English daily newspapers that
Middlesbrough will withdraw
their latest offer if he doesn't
except it.

Schwarzer on his official
website - www.markschwarz-
er.com said he was astounded by
these reports and said while he
has been offered a new 3-year
deal, the only written offer he
has received was no where near
the reported £30,000-a-week
Middlesbrough is reported to
have offered him.

The Australian, who has been
linked with moves to
Manchester United and Arsenal
in recent times, was annoyed
that his contract discussions
were being leaked to the media.

The media reports yesterday
suggest Middlesbrough will not
be held to ransom by Schwarzer
and that their offer would make
him one of the top-six paid
Premiership goalkeepers.



Schwarzer is free to talk to
other clubs as his contract
expires at the end of the season
and could leave on a free trans-
fer, although Middlesbrough
may decide to try and cash in
and sell him during the January
transfer window, if he does not
accept the deal soon.

★ ★ ★ ★

Melbourne-born goalkeeper
Sasa Ilic could be on his
way to the Scottish Premier
League. Aberdeen manager
Jimmy Calderwood is eyeing
Ilic as a short-term option in
goals.

Calderwood
said, "(Goalkeeping coach) Jim
(Leighton) is talking to Sasa.

He played in the play-off to
take Charlton to the
Premiership, saving a penalty in
the shootout to take them up
against Sunderland, so he has
experience.

"Sasa is out of contract and is
training with Bradford. He has a
British passport, so there would
be no hassle with red tape.

"We're waiting to find out if
he's willing to take the offer - his
agent is quite positive.

"We've got three massive
games coming up and we'd like
to get it done in time for them.

"The fear is if James
Blanchard was thrown in at the
deep end, if Ryan (Esson) got
injured, it could ruin his career. I
wouldn't want to put that pres-
sure on a young kid so soon, but
it still might have to be the way,
depending on whether we can
get somebody else in."

★ ★ ★ ★

One of Canberra's most
promising young strikers in
former AIS graduate Mark
Nedeljkovic expressed his com-
ments on his recent stint with
Serbia & Montenegro glamour
club Partizan Belgrade.

The 19-year-old had a seven-
month stint with the well-known
Serbian squad where he gained
expert knowledge from some of
the world's best.

"It was a real eye-opener for
me when I was over there.

"Partizan is one of the best
clubs in Yugoslavia and to be
there was brilliant.

"The set-up there was very
professional with top class
coaches and players."

Nedeljkovic is currently in
Sydney looking for a club in the
NSW Premier League with
Sydney Olympic showing a keen
interest.

The AIS graduate has also cir-
culated interests from rival
Premier League clubs and also
overseas as well.

"My manager Costa
Triantafyllou is currently look-
ing through some options for my
career but I would love to play a
few matches here before jetting
off overseas again."

'Trimmers' blows full time on a great career



Paul Trimballi: South Melbourne great has called it quits from the Australian game

By Mark van Aiken

After more than 450 NSL matches, 3 NSL Player of the Year Awards, a treble of NSL titles and 6 SMFC Best and fairest awards, Paul Trimballi has formally announced his retirement from football.

The 36 old veteran had been training with the South Melbourne FC Squad for the upcoming VPL season, but has decided to draw the curtain on his stellar career.

"Johnny Anastasiadis was keen to get me along and help

mould the new squad, but after a while my body made it clear that it was time to move on" says a circumspect Trimballi, "there will no doubt be some sadness that comes with this, but I believe it was the right decision for me and the club".

Commitment to the club where he has played all but 22 of his NSL matches spanning 3 decades brought him back, and he is hopeful that SMFC will be challenging for the VPL title for years to come.

While professing to not be an expert on the VPL scene, Trimballi is confident that the SMFC squad will stand up to

the test. "South are always competitive. If we aren't winning championships, we're not far off it and I doubt that is going to change in the long term".

There has been some media speculation that South will struggle to compete with the top clubs in Victoria and their pre-season form has done little to rebuke that. So far however, South's young squad has trialed without key senior players including Con Blatsis, Kosta Salapispidis and, at times, Vaughan Coveny. Trimballi has been largely enthused by the energy of the young squad.

"I must admit that I didn't know too many when we started training. I bowed out as they started playing so I can't say how they play from first hand experience. I do know that there is the potential for this year to be very tough".

South's President George Donikian has nothing but the upmost praise for the retiring champion. "Words can't describe what Paul Trimballi means to this club, he has been a brilliant servant of the club in the way he has conducted himself both on and off the field. He was a member of our team of the century and his presence on the pitch will be dearly missed".

On reflection, Trimballi seems a man with few regrets. At different times through out his career the lure of an overseas contract was there, but it never tempted him to make the move. "I was happy with my club and my teams. Things were good in my off-field life at the time and then before you know it... time goes by very quickly, but it was something I never chased aggressively".

Being Australian based

was not always the obstacle to playing in the national team that it is today, and Trimballi regularly pulled on the green and gold shirt. He found the back of the net on no less than 17 occasions in 36 'A Internationals' and represented Australia as recently as 2002 in Oceania competition. The striker was also part of the Socceroos squad that went devastatingly close to qualifying for the 1998 World Cup in France.

With the A-League set down for the later this year, Trimballi says he will only truly miss the game once the new competition kicks off. "With the demise of the NSL there has been nothing to miss really. That might change once the A-League kicks in". Trimballi, who is second to only Alex Tobin in NSL games played, would be forgiven for feeling cheated that the A-League has come right at the end of his career, but the 2 time national youth player of the year disagrees.

"I was around when we made the switch to summer which had plenty of hype around it and I was part of the squad when South went professional", and the highlights don't end there either, "just signing with South was a big thrill for me, they were the glamour team. Even if people didn't know about soccer, they would know about South Melbourne. My career has been extremely successful, I've played in 4 grand finals and won 3. There were a couple of periods that really stand out, one when I started, when Puskas was here, the time under Frank Arok, then Postecoglou."

While not having an official role with the team for the rest of 2005, Trimballi says his heart will always be with

the famous club. The former Socceroo will no doubt be a regular fixture in the stands at SMFC matches this season including the club's opening round clash with Heidelberg United on January 30 at Bob Jane Stadium.

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(Please note that the Club has 4 teams in each age group)

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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ROUND SEVEN FIXTURES

SAT 22 JAN

Home Team	Away Team	Venue	Time
Blue Devils	Parramatta Eagles	Belconnen Soccer Centre	7.00pm
Blacktown City Demons	Central Coast United	Gabbie Stadium	7.00pm
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	St George Saints	Serbian Centre	7.00pm
Rockdale City Suns	Marconi Stallions	St George Stadium	7.00pm

SUN 23 JAN

Home Team	Away Team	Venue	Time
Bankstown City Lions	Penrith Nepean United	Jensen Park	6.00pm
Sydney Crescent Stars	Sydney Olympic	Lidcombe Oval	6.00pm
Wollongong Wolves	Manly Warringah Dolphins	WIN Stadium	6.00pm
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	Sydney United	Lambert Park	6.00pm

Turner hoping Bonnyrigg remain injury free

By Joe Russo

John Turner, now back in the coaching hot seat at Bonnyrigg White Eagles, says that he hopes the club can remain injury free for the rest of the NSW Premier League season, after an horrific injury spell prior to the Christmas and New Year break in the competition.

Speaking to Sunday Night Soccer on 98.5 FM from his holiday home at Sussex Inlet on the NSW South Coast, Turner told listeners that he hoped to have all his top players available for longer periods than he has had them so far.

"I am not disappointed with the team's performances so far because I haven't got them all on the park," Turner said. "When we played Blacktown I had Bobby Despotovski, Tallan Martin, Michael Baird all missing and Dave Petrovic went off with a corked thigh.

"I was missing about seven players who would normally be in the first 11 and I am not talking about squad players. They are first 11

players and I lost all my strikers at one stage there and I had no one up front."

Bonnyrigg White Eagles, on paper at least, have a very impressive squad including the potentially lethal striking combination of Despotovski and Baird. However, the frustration for Turner has been the inability to play his twin strikers at the same time.

"I thought Bobby and Michael would be lethal up front together," he told listeners. "Michael played only in our first game and got carried off on a stretcher, so I only had them together for 30 minutes and we beat Wollongong 4-1.

"Bonnyrigg played in the Johnny Warren Cup and we went right through to the end. We were playing midweek quarter-finals, semi-finals and the final, so we desperately needed this break from the competition."

Turner, who has previously coached Bonnyrigg White Eagles to some dizzy heights in the NSW State League, likes teams that he coaches to entertain. Bonnyrigg and Wollongong Wolves in the now

defunct NSL, both under Turner, were known for being amongst the best attacking teams in their respective competitions.

"I like to entertain and Bonnyrigg hasn't played a 0-0 draw," Turner proudly stated. "I would rather win a game 4-3 than 1-0. The week in and week out punter wants to go and see goals scored. When I was previously at Bonnyrigg we never scored less than 70 goals [a season] and I always encourage players to go out and entertain."

After having coached Wollongong Wolves in their last season in the old NSL, Turner expressed to listeners his disappointment at the way his former club is currently performing and the their lack of a bid for the new A-League.

"I think we were starting to build something good there," he stated. "I was very happy with the last season and we had some very big results with a very young and inexperienced squad.

"Hindsight is a wonderful thing but I think in hindsight they should

have had a punt for the A-League. I believe they would have got into the A-League because it's a very big area and the supporters are so passionate down there.

"With WIN Television, the radio stations down there, their supporter base and their great success in the old league [NSL], to just give up and go back to the state league is very disappointing."

On the subject of returning to the NSW Premier League, Turner expressed his delight at the standard of the competition and compared it favourably with the old NSL. Furthermore, Bonnyrigg White Eagles will lose only a couple of players to the new A-League meaning that most of the squad will be available until the end of the season.

"The state league is a little bit different and for me personally there is not as much travelling because I live very close to Bonnyrigg," he told listeners.

"As far as the league goes it is a very strong league and it's the same players [as the old NSL] who are wearing just different colours. The

standard is exceptional this year.

"Michael Baird has already signed with the Queensland Lions and Bobby Despotovski has signed with Perth Glory. Bobby will be here until at least the end of February and Michael will be with us until the end of the season, so the A-League hasn't impacted on us that much."

And, on the subject of the A-League, does Turner believe it will be successful? "We all hope so but everyone has a bit of reservation about it," he said.

"However, there are a lot of positives but I would like to see more local coaches involved. Everyone knows it is going to a very short league and a local coach.

"I believe, would have had more knowledge about things in the short term. The A-League will certainly be good but it needs to be a longer league with more teams involved."

Sunday Night Soccer airs weekly at 10.00pm every Sunday on radio 98.5 FM in NSW.



Bonnyrigg coach John Turner is upbeat about the White Eagles chances in the NSW Premier League this season

ADELAIDE IS WHERE THE HEART IS

By Peter Damalas

While most A-League franchises have a deeply entrenched foreign policy when it comes to player and coaching recruitments, it is rather refreshing to see Adelaide leading the way quite literally for home grown talent.

A-League clubs Perth Glory, Sydney FC, Queensland Lions and Newcastle United have all signalled their intent to sign either a foreign coach or technical director, players from overseas, or returning Australians, but Adelaide United has largely kept to players developed within the state.

For former Adelaide City and Parramatta Power wing-back Lucas Pantelis, there was no second option when the chance to play under John Kosmina in his home town came knocking.

"I can't wait to start. [Adelaide United] were one of the first clubs to sign players and we had started training in November," Pantelis said.

The 22-year-old was quick to return to South Australia after the last National Soccer League season concluded.

Pantelis - a member of the Joeys squad that finished runner-up to Brazil on penalties in the final of the 1999 Under-17s World Youth Championships in New Zealand - was joined by Parramatta colleague and former Young Socceroo and Olyroo Kosta Salapasis in the South Australian Premier League.

The former played for White City Woodville, whose run ended at the semi-final stage of that competition.

Pantelis returns to familiar surroundings both off and on the field - he played alongside the likes of Aurelio Vidmar, Carl Veart, Michael Vakanis and Ross Aloisi while at

Adelaide City - but he admits there is certainly a difference when it comes to the professionalism of Adelaide United.

"Players look for the structure of a club when they decide where and who to play for. I believe that Adelaide and Perth have proven that they know where they are heading. And the players here all know each other," he said.

Of the eight A-League clubs, Adelaide United appear to have the most unified squad having re-signed nine players.

Among the assembled group of fourteen are Daniel Beltrame, Angelo Costanzo and Pantelis (all returning to their home city) and young local talents Chad Bugeja and Michael Matricciani.

Coach Kosmina will surely attempt to instil in these players a sense of 'tribalism' when combatting the likes of the Lowy-backed Sydney FC, who are casting the net far and wide.

The fact that this team are truly representative of their city and state may prove to be a vital ingredient to their future success.

Meanwhile, Kosta Salapasis admitted that attracting an A-League club to his services was not uppermost on the list of his priorities.

"At this stage I just wanted to settle down in Adelaide. Since I've spent most of my career overseas or interstate, I saw this as an opportunity to catch up with family and friends.

"I didn't want to go for just a 'decent' offer from an interstate A-League club, although I did receive some interest from Central Coast. I was not looking - and to be honest - I was not expecting a great offer, considering the long injury lay-off," he said.

However, the offer from South

Melbourne soon changed his path and in early January the 26-year-old decided to put pen to paper and give the Victorian capital a try.

"Melbourne is not totally new to me, even though I have never played for a club here," he said. "I have some family - my sister moved here some time ago - and I know some people here. I didn't want to go to a city where I knew no one."

Salapasis said that his first experiences with the club have been positive, and that he already feels at home.

"This is exactly what I'm looking for. I get looked after really well and the club has a good history. I feel comfortable here," he said.

After injury curtailed his 2003-04 season with NSL grand finalists Parramatta Power, and given the fact that there has been no elite competition to speak of for over nine months, the former striker stressed the importance of finding his bearings before pursuing greater objectives.

"I am a touch underdone at the moment

but that will clear up when I start playing. I want to continue my career right here and I am motivated to find my best form," he said.

His 'best form' saw him single-handedly knock off Argentina in the World Youth Championships in Malaysia in 1997, when his four goals propelled the Young Socceroos to an upset victory over the eventual champions.

Salapasis (alongside another former NSL attacking midfielder Nathan Day) also helped South Australian Premier League outfit Adelaide Olympic to the grand final - a first for a club that had been promoted to the state's top division a few years ago.

"It was good to play at this level, especially after coming off the injury.

It was enjoyable and I found that the local league fans were perhaps even more passionate than the fans of some [former] national league clubs," he continued.

He also completed a short-lived stint at Sydney Olympic in the NSW Premier League before making the switch to the

Greek backed club in Melbourne.

The challenge for Souths in the Victorian Premier League will certainly be to quickly assert its authority, considering the prestige the club once had on the national level.

But Salapasis is quick to remind all that the club are in a rebuilding phase and will take time to adapt to the new competition and the intensity of each opponent.

Pre-season matches have so far yielded three losses (to Essendon, Oakleigh and Victorian Premier League champions Bulleen Zebras) for John Anastasiadis' team.

"When there is a new squad put together, things do not happen overnight.

This is what the pre-season is about - sorting out the team and getting the players to gel together. The first few weeks will always be tricky.

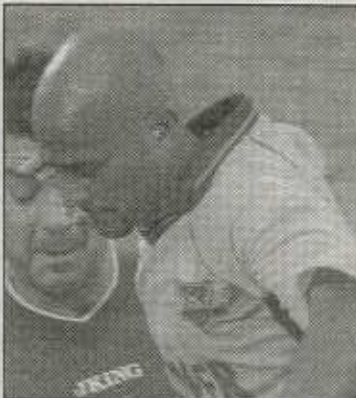
"The club is looking to the future with the many young players. There are only a few players who have NSL experience," Salapasis said.

With the retirement of club great Paul Trimboli, Kosta Salapasis will in effect take over the mantlepiece in the attacking third of midfield, where (after discussion with coach Anastasiadis) he will be playing this season.

He will keep a keen eye on what occurs in the A-League, set to start in August.

"I think it will go well, as there has been a big push in the media.

"My concern though is that some of the squads will not be up to standard to keep the crowds coming. It looks like the three [New South Wales] clubs have snapped up most of the good players and it looks like they will be fighting it out for the title. They look like teams that will be good to watch, but the other clubs may be of the same standard as the NSL," Salapasis said.



South Australians Lucas Pantelis (left) and Kosta Salapasis (right) will enjoy a different type of success in the A-League and Victorian Premier League

Victory secure Thompson deal

Melbourne Victory have announced the signing of Lierse striker Archie Thompson.

Thompson is Victory's first capture as they seek to build their squad for a new A-League season. Victory football chief Gary Cole was delighted with the signing:

"We see Archie as being the first signing of a Marquee Team. We knew that being patient and appointing a coach first would reap the rewards for us.

"We foresee many more high calibre signings in the near future." Thompson is excited by the challenge of leading Victory's attack this year.

"Playing in Europe is an amazing experience, but I feel I've got a great opportunity to help carve a future for football in Australia. "The entire approach from Melbourne Victory throughout the negotiation process has been totally professional and I'm thrilled to be coming back to lead their attack."

Thompson won't be available for the World Cup Championships play-off, but will join Victory at the end of the Belgian season in May.



Archie Thompson: Melbourne Victory's first signing

His recent good form with the Socceroos has won Archie many fans in Australia so his presence in the new A-League is a much added bonus to the Australian game.

2005 a busy year for Socceroos

By Emma Barbir

With Germany 2006 just around the corner, football (the sport with the ball of the round kind) has undergone many changes in our sunburnt country.

The A-League, for example, has become a much-talked about topic, and dozens upon dozens of Australia's footballers are signing up to the eight clubs in the competition, which will start in August this year.

But that is not the only thing football lovers are looking forward to in 2005 - there is also the issue of qualifying for the World Cup. The Socceroos are now more than ready to reach the World Cup finals, after failing to do so on every occasion bar one.

The 1974 World Cup, ironically held in West Germany, was the only occasion Australia competed in the tournament. Perhaps now, 32 years on, we can break the curse.

Oceania was not granted an automatic entry to the Cup, so Australia was once again subjected to the arduous task of playing Pacific Island minnows throughout 2004.

In a second-stage qualifying group with New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tahiti, Australia overcame the initial shock of a 2-2 draw with the Solomons to head the table by the end of the round-robin matches.

Australia will now play the Solomon Islands in a two-legged tie later this year, with the winner then facing a further play-off against the fifth-placed South American country for a place in the finals. As it currently stands, that team is set to be Uruguay.

Like the World Cup, the

2005 Confederations Cup is also being held in Germany, and Australia will take on the host nation in Frankfurt on the first day of the tournament. Rounding up Group A are Argentina and Tunisia, who will kick off the event on the 15th of June in Cologne.

Japan, coached by the

when Romario and Ronaldo each scored a hat-trick.

Because of Australia's geographical position, as well as its lack of football ties with other countries, the Confederations Cup will provide Australia with some of its very few chances to compete against top quality oppo-

all of his top players are expected to be at the Cup later this year.

This tournament is just what Australia needs to get ready for the World Cup play-off against that dreaded South American team in November. After all, a World Cup spot is the ultimate dream of any



Ready for a barnstorming season will be the Socceroos

Brazilian great Zico, has been pitted in the same group as his home country. Mexico, along with Euro2004 winners Greece, make up Group B.

Australia is the lowest ranked in its group, sitting on 58th spot, 23 places behind Tunisia. Germany is resting on 19th place, with Argentina well above them on 3rd. Regardless of this apparent disadvantage, Australia's Confederations Cup record is rather impressive.

Everyone in Australia cringes when reminded of the Socceroos' loss to Uruguay in 2001, denying Australia a chance to play at South Korea/Japan. But Mark Viduka's extra-time goal eliminated Uruguay from the 1997 Confederations Cup. The Socceroos then proceeded to the final, where they met Brazil, only to lose 6-0

sition. Few will disagree that this will be a tough test for the Socceroos, but there is no doubt Frank Farina will be sending his first choice squad to Germany.

Despite past Confederations Cups, where teams would commonly arrive with a young and inexperienced squad, this year's tournament looks to be like one taken more seriously. Japan and Brazil have ensured that they will be bringing along their first starting 11, and Germany will be taking it as a dress rehearsal for the World Cup.

As host, Germany does not have to qualify for the 2006 World Cup and are lacking any proper match preparation.

Accordingly, coach Jurgen Klinsmann will be taking it very seriously and

Socceroo supporter.

The official match tickets for World Cup 2006 will be available to football fans around the world on the internet from 1st February 2005.

Significantly cheaper than those sold for World Cup 2002 in South Korea/Japan, seats at next year's World Cup start at just 35 Euros. "Follow Your Team" tickets are also available, which guarantees you a seat for every game your country plays, up to and including the final in Berlin.

With 3.2 million people expected to attend the games in Germany from June 9th to July 9th 2006, over 25,000 volunteers have already signed up to help out during the massive tournament. Let's just hope Australia will be part of it.

Jets reach twelve signings

Newcastle United Jets have added Franco Parisi and Matt Thompson to their playing roster as preparations for the Hyundai A-League continue.

The Jets have added more firepower to their squad with former Young Socceroo Parisi signing a 1 year contract. Parisi is rejoining



Franco Parisi: Rejected an offer from Switzerland to sign with the Newcastle Jets

former Sydney Olympic teammate Ante Milicic. Parisi, a striker, has played 58 games in the NSL scoring 14 goals, 9 of which came when partnering Milicic in 2002/03.

"It's great to be part of the Jets squad. They have recruited some fantastic players, and to

be a part of that is a wonderful opportunity," Parisi said. "I really think we have a team that will be a force in the Hyundai A-League. Having played with a number of the boys before, I think we will form a solid, competitive unit very quickly."

Parisi has rejected an offer from Swiss club FC Baden to join the Jets.

"It's hard to ignore the excitement being generated by the Hyundai A-League, and to have the opportunity to be part of the competition is a great honour", said Parisi.

Midfielder Matt Thompson has also signed with the club for 2 years after 5 years with the now defunct Parramatta Power. Thompson has played 93 games in the NSL, scoring 8 goals, and has a reputation as being one of the country's hardest working midfielders. He adds yet another option for the club in the midfielder which now boasts the cream of Australian talent.

"The competition for spots in the team is going to be very fierce, and that's what every player always wants. It helps improve your own game, and the overall team performance," Thompson said.

"Like the other players who have signed, I was impressed by the professionalism of the club, and the caliber of the players who have signed."

Parisi and Thompson will join the squad on February 14 to commence preseason training.

AUSTRALIAN WORLD CUP PLAYER INSULTED

When I received my Gold Pass from Australian Soccer Federation I felt honoured to be recognised as an ex Socceroo.

This pass was supposed to allow me free admission to all Soccer games in Australia.

However now it has become an embarrassment to try and use this pass.

For International Games it cannot be used. You have to

ring and request tickets from Soccer Australia where you can be passed from person to person or asked to ring back. So feeling like a nuisance begging for tickets I no longer bother.

Over the years I have frequently used the Gold Pass to attend National League Games and local competition games organised by Soccer NSW.

On several occasions I



**FOOTBALL
FEDERATION
AUSTRALIA**

have been pulled up as the person on the gate has not recognised the card. I had always been able to explain or find an official to accept this card.

However on Sunday 12th December 2004 I attended NSW Premier League game Parramatta Eagles vs Rockdale Suns at Melita Stadium Parramatta Eagles Secretary Joe Borg (who was extremely rude) stated that he

had a list of tickets and passes accepted by Soccer NSW and the Australian Gold Pass was not there.

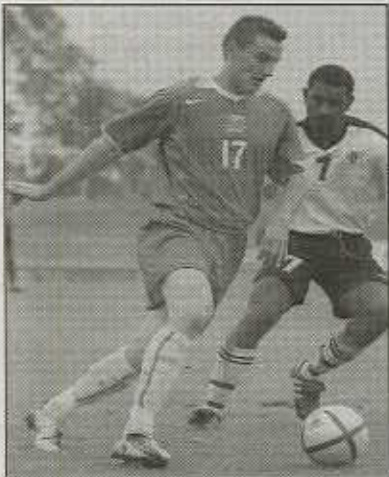
I was refused entry and had to pay for a ticket. I felt so embarrassed and humiliated.

As I am also aware that other Gold Pass holders have had similar experiences would you please provide me with a written reply of what is the current official status of my Gold Pass.



**DOUGIE UTJESENOVIC:
Austrian 1974 World Cup defender**

ZDRILIC RETURN TO BOOST NATIONAL TEAM CHANCES



David Zdrilic: The strikers return with Sydney FC could once again ignite his Soccerroo selection

Sydney FC striker David Zdrilic believes returning home to join Sydney FC in the Hyundai A-League will boost his chances of continuing his Qantas Soccerroo career as he will be playing in the "shop front window".

Zdrilic arrived back in Sydney earlier this week and is eager to get started as he believes playing in front of Qantas Soccerroo Coach Frank Farina will help him add to his 29 international caps.

The 30-year-old played seven internationals in 2004 but without playing in a league, which is televised in Australia, he said it was hard to

make a consistent impression on Farina and his coaching staff.

"One of the reasons I have decided to come home is that I think it will be easier to be noticed if I am playing in front of them," he said. "Unless you are on TV in Europe it is hard for people to see how you are going."

"I have been part of the Soccerroo set up for a few years and if I can play well here and score some goals then I am right in the shop front window and they know what I can do on the international scene."

Zdrilic also took heart from the path taken by Ahmad Elrich, Ante Milicic and Simon Colosimo, who all played a major part in Qantas Soccerroo matches in 2004 while playing in the now defunct NSL.

While many players toiled hard overseas, the trio was able to impress as they were in the public eye and able to be tracked.

"Those guys did very well last year and they came to be noticed because they were right in front of everyone," Zdrilic said.

"Just because a player is playing overseas does not mean they are any worse or better than those playing in Australia."

"The standard of the A-League will be good as there are a few players coming back and also with only eight teams you would expect the better players to remain in the competition."

Zdrilic will begin pre-season training along with his new Sydney FC team mates in February.

A lot has changed for NSW Premier League glamour club Sydney Olympic since its move back into the NSW state league.

Unfortunately there have been more lows than highs during their debut season.

Having gone from being champions of the National League some three seasons ago, Olympic are currently languishing in eleventh spot as the Premier League clicks into overdrive in its initial first season.

Sydney Olympic fans have been left scratching their heads on the success of the club so far after their third loss of the season to an out-of-form but spirited Wollongong Wolves side last weekend.

This was following a shock one-nil loss to the Rockdale City Suns prior to the Christmas break.

Things looked promising prior to the start of the league this year when the Blues assigned some of the best stars around in the Premier League when the likes of Andre Gumprecht, Wayne O'Sullivan, Michael Beauchamp and Esala Masi all joined the squad this year.

The former NSL stars joined forces with Troy Halpin, John Buonavoglia and Paul Kohler in a side that looked unbeatable on paper,

however poor results have stated otherwise.

Behind the scenes several players have parted company with the club causing a shake-up with new coach John Doyle who has opted to operate with inexperienced players rather than experienced stars.

Doyle has struggled to gain positive results with Olympic thus causing major concerns to his future at the club.

John Buonavoglia, George Souris, Jim Bakis, Troy Halpin, Gareth Deeg, Zenon Caravella and Mitchell Johnson have all come and gone at Olympic and the ironic part of it is, the competition has only seen six rounds.

Speculation has it that more players are on the way out.

An alarming statistic for any side, the departure of one of Australia's finest playmakers in Troy Halpin has seen the club lose its ways.

Since his move to the Central Coast United, Halpin has raised the team from the bottom half of the table to sixth on the ladder.

A favourite son during the

glory days at Olympic, Halpin's absence along with the experienced Souris in defence and Bakis with Buonavoglia in the front-line has really caused a major concern within the stability of the squad.

What will become yet another major concern for the club is the fact that already three of the club's main players have signed contracts with A-League side the Central Coast Mariners for the new season.

The loss of Gumprecht, Beauchamp and O'Sullivan, who will start their pre-season off with the Coast in February will throw yet another huge obstacle in the team's structure.

Known for being one of the toughest and most ruthless supporters in Australia, Olympic fans have already voiced their anger towards coach Doyle as the club continues to search for some much needed form.

Already calls for Doyle's departure have been heeded by the Olympic supporters

and with a continuation of poor results could see him go very soon.

Club President Graham Athanaseris labeled this season as an exciting new period for Sydney Olympic but the lack of wins for a club that has been rich in winning has cast some grave doubts about the future of the club.

"At this stage we will be looking into things in regards to the coach but we will not be making any changes."

"It's too early to call at this stage", Athanaseris stated to the 'Greek Herald'.

The alarm bells are currently ringing at OKI Jubilee Oval and already speculation has ran rife that a new coach is said to be on the way.

Leon Gardikiotis and Michael Urukalo have been names touted as being the next coach in charge in what has been a turbulent year so far for Olympic.

The club has organized a General Meeting today (Tuesday) where the talk of getting a new coach could certainly be on the books.

Asian warm-up for Perth



David Tarka: Could come back to the Glory from Nottingham Forest

By Mark Stavroulakis

A-League club Perth Glory have stated their wish in playing against quality Asian opposition before the commencement of this year's new competition in August.

The Glory declined the chance to take part in Singapore's FA Cup competition due to the timing of the tournament but the club held positive talks between various Asian countries and their bids to play against the country's elite league players.

A home and away series against an S-League All-Star side in June have been put in the pipeline as has discussions with various Asian sides from Malaysia and China.

It's been no secret that the Football Federation of Australia have been keen advocates in supporting and strengthening ties with Asia which has also been Glory chairman Nick Tana's main objective for the new year.

"I've always said that strengthening ties with our neighbours Asia had to be on the cards."

"For far too long we have been looked the wrong way by the Asian market but with the new league intact, now's the time to hone in on this enormous and well financed football paradise."

One new rule that the FFA has put through has been the fact that A-League clubs should not play against each other but broadening their horizons elsewhere, like Asia.

Perth Glory chief executive Jeff Dennis said that the club was looking at several options which included the S-League All-Star game and matches against the Malaysian and Singapore National teams.

Perth's first priority however is to prepare for the world club championship qualifiers in May.

The Glory have been given direct entry towards the semi-final leaving the six other A-League sides (minus the Kingz) in battling it out in the first round phase.

The Members Equity Stadium will be on hand in showcasing the semi-final event between the Glory and one of the six A-League sides.

The winner of the tournament will go on to represent Oceania in Japan at the end of the year playing against a host of elite sides from South America, North America and Europe.

At the present moment, Tana has ventured off to England where he will be hopefully tying up the final deal with the club's new coach for the start of the A-League season.

Until then, technical director and former Glory coach Mich d'Avary has run rule over the 13 new recruits at the club, but it is believed that a further five from overseas could be on their ways to Western Australia.

Perth are on the verge of signing goalkeeper Jason Petkovic from Turkey while interests have beamed on Joel Porter, David Tarka, Travis Dodd and Joel Griffiths.

Again Tana stated to ABSW that the Glory will not be signing a marquee player.

Aussie refs chase World Cup spots

Two Australian referees are under consideration for next year's football World Cup in Germany.

Mark Shield and Matthew Breeze are among 46 international referees who will attend a workshop in Frankfurt next month for medical tests and training sessions.

At least one will be selected as Oceania's representative on the tournament's refereeing roster, with around 30 spots in total up for grabs.

Shield officiated at the last World Cup in Japan and South Korea in 2002, when he was the youngest referee at the tournament.

Both have been known to be this country's best referees and have both taken part in various world tournament competitions.

Shield came under the spotlight during last October's European World Cup clash between Northern Ireland and Austria.

Austria manager Hans Krankl was left fuming with Shield after the three-all draw.

"I'm extremely disappointed, the third goal was irregular," he said. "I don't know what this Australian referee is doing in Europe anyway."

"He's allowed things to happen that you just can't allow to happen. What he

allowed them to play wasn't soccer, this was rugby."

The final list of World Cup referees will be announced early next year.

Meanwhile ACT referee Ben Williams plus assistant referees Jason Power and Hakan Anaz are the new additions to feature on the FIFA international panel of match officials for 2005. The 24-strong list of Australians includes male and female referees and assistant referees as well as Futsal referees. Eddie Lennie former Australian referee of the year and Australian representative at the 1998 FIFA World Cup is a notable absentee from the list.

The 45-year-old West Australian having reached the retirement age for international referees after 9 years on the FIFA referees panel.

The full list of Australian FIFA match officials is:

Mens Referees:
Matthew Breeze, Con Diomis, Simon Micallef, Mark Shield, Ben Williams

Mens Assistant Referees:
Hakan Anaz, Matthew Cream, Paul Eldridge, Nathan Gibson, Jim Ouliaris, John Peacock, Jason Power, Jonathan Streater, Peter Vrtkovski, Ben Wilson

Womens Referees:
Jacqui Melksham, Tammy Ogston, Krystyna Szokolai

Womens Assistant Referees:
Sarah Ho, Airlie Keen, Jacqueline Leleu, Michelle Treloar,

Futsal Referees:
Lyle Hudson, Robert Porritt



Australian whistleblower Mark Shield wants to officiate in Germany for the 2006 World Cup

SYDNEY FC LOOKING FOR INTERNATIONAL FLAVOUR

By Peter Damalas

Sydney FC chief executive officer Andrew Harper said last week that the club will not be rushing to reveal further information about the head coaching position or the five positions yet to be finalised in the twenty man squad.

"We are hoping to come to a decision as soon as possible, but we will not decide for the sake of it," he said of the recruitment of a foreign coach.

Harper confirmed that Dutchman Arie Haan will be the likely coach of the A-League venture after stating that he was the only candidate with whom formal talks had been held last weekend.

"The discussion is continuing and we are working diligently," he said. "But we are committed to a direction that is overseas."

It is believed the shortlist for the coaching post at Sydney FC consists of the former Chinese national team coach Haan, and two Englishmen- former Aston Villa manager John Gregory and former assistant at Manchester United and manager of Blackburn Rovers Brian Kidd.

The recruitment of such an experienced foreign coach has provoked debate about the possible role of the head coach, who will be assisted by former Newcastle United coach Ian Crook.

Managing the professional A-League

squad is seen as the primary task while youth development and technical support are other considerations.

Harper stated that the coach will need to avail himself in the community in order to establish Sydney FC as a benchmark club for the elite competition.

"The main focus of the coach will be the fortunes of the professional team.

"But Sydney FC is more than a football club. We are looking for someone to involve himself in the community and have a positive effect on football," he said.

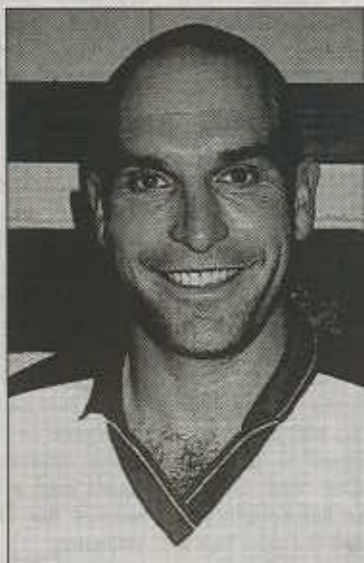
It appears that the club is building up an 'international flavour', which Harper argues is one of the strengths of the world game.

This comes in the face of criticism about the possibility of the club finalising its playing roster with five overseas signings, reducing the opportunities of local players. Harper attempted to pour cold water over this issue.

"In terms of bringing in the remaining players, we are not abiding by a hard and fast rule, but yes we are leaving some space for international flavour," he said.

Harper said that the rationale behind this policy is to provide difference and to recognise that football is a global sport.

"We are looking to offer a different football package. This is not a mark of disrespect to before [the National Soccer League], but it is important to realise that football operates in a global marketplace."



Sydney FC CEO Andy Harper will be bringing an international flavour towards the new squad this season

When asked about whether the remaining players will, like American youngster Alejandro Salazar, be creative and add a touch of flair to the 'glamour Club', Harper said that the net has been cast far and wide but stated that the coach will make the decisions.

"We are looking everywhere. But in terms of the type of player we will acquire, those decisions will be made by

the head coach after he looks at the squad we have already and what we need."

This opens up the issue that the player recruitment process has moved in different directions without one primary figure behind the collation of a squad.

The first six players were signed by the club with the help of recruitment consultants, while the following nine players were signed by Crook, who assumed responsibility for the playing side after his appointment as assistant coach, in consultation with the board.

"We are comfortable with the squad. How we have signed our players doesn't matter, it is not an issue. The club's process is streamlined," Harper said.

"We are pretty well served in most areas.

Perhaps we will look to strengthen our midfield ranks, and hopefully add more technical proficiency," Harper ran his eye over the signings and concluded that the squad boasts a solid mix of experience, leadership and technical skill, together with the four players under twenty years of age (Mark Milligan, Wade Oostendorp, Justin Pasfield and Jacob Timpano).

"From the back we have Clint Bolton who provides us with a comfortable pair of hands. We have the young kids who are hungry to succeed are vying for places in

the World Youth Championships later this year. Of the local based players, almost all of them have won [NSL] championship medals, and know what it takes to be successful. I am excited about the ex-pats [former teammates of his at Marconi] Ufuk Talay and Steve Corica, and David Zdrilic.

Talay is a great talent and is ready to hit his peak, Corica is young enough to dish it up, while Zdrilic is a current Socceroo," he said.

Just fifteen spots remain open at the three A-League clubs within New South Wales, which will leave a whole array of players currently plying their trade with Premier League clubs in the hope of obtaining a professional contract, out of the loop.

"There is limited space in the A-League and unfortunately there is no way around this," Harper said.

The first priority of the newly appointed CEO is to oversee the establishment of the club's system, considering it was not a part of the NSL (unlike Perth Glory, Adelaide United and Newcastle United).

"We are ensuring that we are up and ready before we hit the road, interact in the community and meet the demand," Harper said.



Maradona hails Greek 'miracle'

Former Argentine superstar Diego Maradona said this week that the Greek national team winning the Euro 2004 title was a "miracle."

"There are always miracles in football. Greece beat everybody and it is always good for football when small teams win championships. This shows that this small country has good players," an overweight Maradona said at Athens airport.



Maradona: Hailed Greece's Euro 2004 success

Maradona was in Greece to give an interview with a private TV station.

"The people should keep their enthusiasm for football and this was great what happened in Greece. There are a lot of negative things in football, but that what happened in Euro 2004 was great for all."

Strong rumours have flooded ABSW about the great man possibly making a trip to Australia? Now wouldn't that be a sight to see

EX-SPIRIT TRIO AND YOUNG SOCCEROO JOIN MARINERS

By Ben Coonan

The Central Coast Mariners have added a further four players to their inaugural Hyundai A-League playing roster, leaving just two spots of their available twenty to be filled.

Former Northern Spirit trio John Hutchinson, Stewart Petrie and Adam Kwasnik will be reunited with their former manager Lawrie McKinna at Central Coast Express Advocate Stadium in 2005, while Young Socceroo and former Parramatta Power goalkeeper Danny Vukovic is also on his way to Central Coast shores.

Each of the aforementioned four-some is currently playing in the NSW Premier League.

Kwasnik and Petrie are the primary attacking options for table toppers Blacktown City, while Hutchinson is fronting for Manly United and Vukovic keeping for Bonyrigg White Eagles.

Hutchinson, 25, finished the 2003/04 NSL season rated as one of local competitions finest attacking midfielders.

Having begun a successful NSL career as a 17-year-old with Victoria's Eastern Pride, Hutchinson moved to the Spirit in 2001/02, where he starred in their finals charge the following season.

"Hutch, potentially, is one of the best attacking midfielders in the country on the left side," said coach

McKinna. "He can score goals from midfield and he's a great personality, he'll fit in well with the squad."

Striker Kwasnik, 21, is joint top-scorer in the NSW Premier League at present, with five goals after five rounds.

Also capped for the Young Socceroo, Kwasnik made 59 NSL appearances for 12 goals in the old competition, starting in 2001 with the Parramatta Power and concluding in 2004 with the Spirit.

"Kwas is probably one of the best finishers in Australia, he just needs to get a wee bit physically stronger," said McKinna.



John Hutchinson: Snubbed Melbourne Victory for the Central Coast Mariners

"He's a great goal scorer and he's got some fantastic skills that people pay money to come and see."

Kwasnik's Blacktown City strike partner Petrie has also been amongst the goals in the Hyundai A-League downtime, slotting three in the early rounds.



Petrie, 35 in February, came to Blacktown City after a short stint with Singaporean side Geylang United, which came on the back of his influential stay with the Spirit in the NSL.

After joining the Spirit late in their 2002/03 campaign, Petrie's stint at the now defunct North Shore club finished with ten goals and 37 matches to his name.

Petrie's main notoriety, however, comes from his illustrious career in his home country of Scotland, where he clocked up over 300 appearances for top-flight side Dunfermline Athletic.

"He's very experienced and hard working. He'll be a great partner and workhorse up front for us," said McKinna of his fellow ex-pat.

"He holds the ball up well, brings other people into the game and he's doing extremely well in the NSW Premier League with Blacktown."

Youth international Vukovic, who is currently preparing for the World Youth Championship qualifiers with the Young Socceroo, is the Mariners second of three mandatory under 20 signings.

Having played understudy to Hyundai A-League custodians Liam Reddy and Clint Bolton in his time at Parramatta Power, Vukovic is sure to challenge Mariners number one John Crawley for a starting spot in 2005.

"He's probably one of the up and coming keepers from the National League," said McKinna of the sixth youth international to join the Mariners.

"He's knocking on the door of John Crawley to be the number one keeper, he's only 19 years old and he can realistically see a light at the end of the tunnel."

Off the field, the Central Coast Mariners this week launched their on line web presence at www.ccm Mariners.com.au, which will aim to keep their fan base in touch with all that's happening at Central Coast Express Advocate Stadium as the Hyundai A-League kick off draws nearer.

In the coming weeks, the site will expand to include updated news, player profiles, exclusive interviews and much more.

Victory set to announce new recruits

By
Mark Stavroulakis

Currently known to all A-League pundits as the only team not to officially secure a player yet, the Melbourne Victory are on the hunt in securing the full 20-man squad very shortly.

One such player that is set to move back to his home-town thanks to the A-League is experienced striker Andy Vlahos.

It is believed that the current Cercle Brugge star had signed a three-year deal with the Victory during the Christmas period and there's a possibility that he could be back for the Melbourne squad for pre-season on the first of March.

Vlahos' manager former Socceroo striker Eddie Krncevic

stated that Andy is keen on coming home.

"If it's not a really good offer from Cercle then he's interested in coming home.

"There are still a few details to iron out with the Victory's offer but he's pretty happy with what they've offered.

However three A-League clubs have been on the hunt for Vlahos, the Kingz in particular, also Cercle could offer Andy a new deal.

Coming off contract with the Belgium club in May, Vlahos has spent two sterling seasons with Cercle where he has gained a reputation for scoring and setting up goals.

Cercle though are currently battling relegation but believe they can avoid the drop.

The Victory though are looking

towards recruiting at least one overseas star but have not left the possibility of bringing back Melbourne Danny Tiatto and Kevin Muscat.



Current Young Socceroo star Spase Dilevski who is making a name for himself at Tottenham Hotspurs along with Dynamo Dresden striker Josh Kennedy have also been linked to a move back to

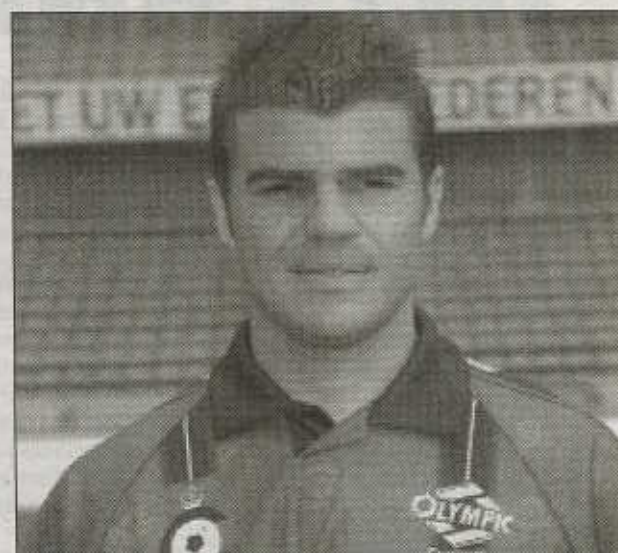
their home-towns.

Archie Thompson became the club's first signing last week.

Victory coach Ernie Merrick has been in heavy contact with a handful of players and it is believed that the following list could well be new recruits for the A-League squad.

Kristian Sarkies, Carl Recchia, Steve Pantelidis, Adrian Leijer, Vince Lia, Massimo Murdocca, Billy Celeski, Michael Theoklitos, Eugene Galekovic, Simon Storey, Serkan Oksuz, Michael Ferrante, Rody Vargas and Michael Curcija have been spoken to.

Merrick is set to announce a rather young squad and through his experiences at the VIS and with various Australian national team squads, holds an impressive record amongst this nation's promising youngsters.



Andy Vlahos: The Belgium based striker could be on his way back to Australia with the Melbourne Victory or the Kingz?

Krncevic backs Haan at Sydney



Eddie Krncevic: Former Socceroo has backed Arie Haan as being the successor at Sydney FC

Former Socceroo striker Eddie Krncevic says Sydney FC's coaching target Arie Haan would 'bring excellence to the A-League'.

Dutch coach Haan has just left Australia after having talks with Sydney FC, and

Krncevic says Haan would be a much better appointment than John Gregory or Brian Kidd, who will reportedly be interviewed later this month.

"I had eight clubs in Europe and my season under Arie at Anderlecht was one of the best I ever had," Krncevic told The Daily Telegraph.

"I scored 16 goals and we won the title. I hope to God Sydney get him because he's by far the best coach I worked with."

"Arie's technical, tactical and explains and executes everything perfectly. He's also witty and very clever. He's a great motivator who would bring excellence to the A-League."

"Of the names bandied about for the Sydney job he's certainly the best."

Sydney FC's determination to appoint a high-profile foreign coach has left a bitter

taste in the mouth of overlooked well-credentialed local candidates, but Krncevic told the Sydney newspaper that Haan would be worth the investment.

"You can understand why some of them are upset at being overlooked but somebody like Arie will bring so much to the game," he said.

"Having a person like him involved here can only benefit us. He comes with a huge reputation."

On another front, Krncevic's 20-year-old son Jesse has currently tied up a contract deal with Victorian Premier League side South Melbourne for the new season set to kick off at the end of the month.

Jesse will be looking towards emulating his famous father as he is also a striker.

Zelic to win back Socceroo spot

A familiar face could one again re-appear on the team list of the Socceroos next month when the Australians clash with the South Africans as part of Frank Farina's first friendly fixture for the new year.

Ned Zelic, who last put on the green and gold shirt five years ago could be a surprise selection for Farina's squad after the National coach reiterated that he would talk to Ned about a possible recall.

After signalling his intent on once again playing for Australia after his controversial bust-up with Farina, the 33-year old could be that missing link the Roos have been searching for.

At this stage, the Socceroos do not boast that playmaker in midfielder, although most would certainly agree that the side have no problems in the attacking third of the side.

Zelic would slip into the playmakers role with ease if given the chance but close sources have stated to ABSW that it



Ready for a Socceroo re-call: Ned Zelic

will come to fruition.

Currently playing for Austrian First Division side Wacker Tirol, Farina will be going to watch one of Ned's home matches before interviewing him about his current situation in the National Team.

There will still be issues to be resolved between the pair but the very versatile midfielder would surely comply with the ground rules that will be set out by Farina in joining the squad.

Its come at a perfect time for Australia as the 2006 route to Germany is only a couple of months away with qualification games set to take place.

The last known bust-up by a Socceroos player was last year when Everton defender Eddy Bosnar slammed Farina and his selection tactics.

The Football Federation of Australia has insisted that such occurrences will not happen with new strict guidelines been put into place with players interacting with the media.

Stallions face injury hurdle

By Adam Leto

A coach's job was never meant to be easy and Stallions boss Zlatko Nasteovski is learning the hard way.

In his first foray into coaching, the former Marconi star, who was thrown the reins a week prior to the season kick-off, has had to deal with a squad that have spent as much time in the physio room as they have on the pitch.

Injuries have so far prevented the Stallions from fielding their strongest line-up and as key players get set to link-up with their A-League clubs, fans face the

prospect of not getting the opportunity to see the side play at their peak.

"You could say that we've had a few problems with injuries," Nasteovski said.

"Just when it looks like things are getting better something seems to happen again."

Captain Brad Maloney who missed the earlier part of the season through injury, is again sidelined with a thigh complaint, while Grant Last is still on the road to recovery with a shin injury, along with Erick Anabalon who is yet to play a game this season after undergoing knee surgery in the off-season.

Sasha Trajceviski who was starting to find his feet at the back is also out injured and new signing Jay Lucas is away with the Young Socceroos.

"It's hard to find consistency with so many players injured and the ones that are leaving also."

"I think we've had something like 14 players carrying injuries at one time."

"How long it will take for the side to blend once everything is sorted out, is something we'll have to wait and see."

The Stallions will have the services of Dean Heffernan and Paul O'Grady for two more weeks before



Ace Marconi striker Eric Anabalon has yet to kick a ball this season

they join their respective A-League clubs, while Nick Carle will stay for an extra week before linking with the Newcastle Jets.

McKay agrees to Queensland Lions

Queensland Lions has secured its ninth signing with former Australian Under 20 international Matt McKay agreeing to play for the club in the inaugural Hyundai A-League competition.

The 22-year old exciting attacking midfielder has electrified audiences in Australia since making his debut with Brisbane Strikers against Perth Glory in 2002.

McKay, a local product, made 51 appearances for the Strikers and scored two goals, in his three seasons at the club.

He was selected in the Australian Under 20 team

that went to the 2003 FIFA World Youth Championships and played in all four games, including two starting appearances.

McKay also made one appearance for the Qantas Under 23's at the 2004 Oceania Qualifiers held in Sydney early last year.

Matthew has been touted as one of the most talented players ever to come out of the Queensland youth development system.

He was also a product of the AIS where he gained much praise from head-coach Steve O'Connor.

Known as a tough midfielder in never backing out



Matthew McKay: Has agreed to terms with the Queensland Lions

of a challenge, Lions coach Miron Bleiberg will certainly be utilising the services of the young Queensland star.



SOCCER NSW LIFTOUT

GOALS GALORE!!!!

41 REASONS WHY IT'S A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

By Greg Stock

It was goals galore in the NSW Premier League as scoring records tumbled in an amazing weekend of soccer.

The eight matches produced an astonishing 41 goals at an average of 5.125 per game. That's the highest number of goals in a round and the highest average in the league's history.

The average before the weekend's mayhem was a respectable 24.4 goals per round at 3.05 goals per game.

The St. George Saints' 9-3 demolition of Blacktown City Demons set a new league record of 12 goals in one match. The previous record was 11 when A.P.I.A.

beat Fairfield Bulls 9-2 in February 2003.

Scoring nine goals, the Saints equalled the club record set in 1981 when they smashed Canterbury Marrickville 9-1.

It all started at Dee Why on Friday night when New Zealand international Brent Fisher ran wild, putting four past Suns goalkeeper John Perosh to help Manly United F.C. to their first win of the season.

Anchored to the bottom of the competition table, Fisher's return to form was just the tonic Manly needed at a crucial stage of the season. He has now scored five of the team's six goals thus far and will take his red hot form to Wollongong next week for an appointment with the Wolves.

On Saturday night at St. George Stadium, Daniel Watkins continued the

streak hitting four against title contenders Blacktown City in one of the most remarkable football matches seen for years.

While Watkins was taking the plaudits from the Saints faithful spare a thought for Demons' frontman Adam Kwasnik. The Central Coast Mariners-bound marksman scored all three in his side's losing effort.

The Demons' keeper John Crawley carried a hamstring injury into the match and was replaced after conceding three goals in just 29 minutes. The Saints showed no mercy.

The Premier League's big improvers, Central Coast United, mauled the reigning champions Bankstown City Lions. The 6-1 margin complete with doubles from Shane Knight and youngster Peter Haynes backing up coach Grant Lee's comments that his team are "the real deal and genuine title contenders."

NSL GIANTS ON THE ROPES

What a difference a season makes. Last year they were rubbing shoulders with the elite clubs of the National League, but this season Wollongong Wolves, Marconi and Sydney Olympic are fighting for their very survival anchored inside the bottom eight of the new-look Premier League. After a much heralded return to the local state league competition, the 'big three' have failed to fire and face a desperate month if they are to make ground on the leaders.

Of most concern is Marconi. The former Rolls Royce of the national league is looking more like a beaten up old banger with speculation mounting that coach Zlatko Nasteovski is under pressure from a club desperate for success.

Nasteovski was clearly disappointed at his side's late capitulation in the local derby against Sydney United and offered a firm "no comment" after the match, setting up a tough week in the Marconi boardroom.

Sydney Olympic are also on the outer in the wake of two straight losses and have failed to really fire in their opening six games. The Olympic faithful were so

incensed at the team's performance last weekend that some sections jeered coach John Doyle, setting up their next assignment away to Sydney Crescent Star as a must win game.

Showing some signs of life is Wollongong, which eased its woes with a hard fought 2-1 win over Sydney Olympic last Sunday. But the visit of last week's four goal hero Brent Fisher and his rejuvenated Manly United F.C. this weekend could well see them in further hot water.

"Our win last weekend was a start, but we still have a long way to go," said Wolves coach Adrian Alston. "We are basically playing with a team of local players with Dominic Longo, George Souris and Ben Blake thrown in. I would love to have some of the players other teams have but that's just not possible and we just have to keep hammering away."

Only Sydney United has made an impression and they are exceeding even their own lofty ambitions in leading the competition. Things at Edensor Park can only get better with a guest appearance by Mark Rudan scheduled to start this weekend in an away trip to Lambert Park against A.P.I.A. Leichhardt on Sunday.

FIVE GOALS = \$2,500

The Capitol Hill Estate Cup on Saturday night produced its fair share of interest notwithstanding the discussions on Marconi's late capitulation. The \$15,000 prize money will continue onto the second leg with United holding the whip hand via a 3-2 win.

The \$500 per goal bounty also produced some inspiring football with \$1,500 on its way to the United players fund and \$1,000 heading the way of the Stallions players. Just as well the same bounty wasn't on offer at St. George Stadium where twelve goals would have seen \$6,000 handed over.

Man of the Match in the game was Leo Carle, who pocketed an individual award of \$500. Liam Reddy was second with \$300 while Luke Casserly picked up \$200

for third. Interestingly soccer fan John Paul Young was on hand to sing the national anthem, having grown up in the Fairfield area before pursuing a career in music.

CHIMA LEAVES MARCONI

The Stallions are also reeling from the loss of striker Chimaobi Nwaogazi, who leaves Australia today (Tuesday) for Singapore. The Nigerian born goalscorer was out of favour with coach Zlatko Nasteovski and has been released to Singapore, where he is expected to join Geylang in the S-League.



New Marconi Football Chairman Morris Licata (left) presents the Capitol Hill 'Man of the Match' Award to Leo Carle (centre) with Marconi board member Vince Foti (far right) looking on



Nigerian striker Chima Nwaogazi has parted company with Marconi and has accepted an offer in Singapore with Geylang



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE

AT A GLANCE

MARCONI 2
SYDNEY UNITED 3

Marconi's season hangs on a knife's edge after Sydney United substitute Mile Jedinak manufactured a late winner to sink the Stallions 3-2. With \$15,000 in prize money plus a bounty of \$500 per goal, the Capital Hill Estate Cup went the way of United after a highly entertaining contest, which turned up the heat on Stallions boss Zlatko Nastevski.

ST GEORGE 9
BLACKTOWN 3

St. George sent the statisticians scurrying for the record books after posting an emphatic 9-3 win over title contenders Blacktown City. Daniel Watkins nailed four in the rout that saw Demons goalkeeper John Crawley replaced after half an hour with injury, his deputy, young Brody Crane being put to the sword as the Saints forwards ran rampant.

CENTRAL COAST 6
BANKSTOWN 1

The loss of Sydney F.C. striker Saso Petrovski couldn't have come at a worse time for new Bankstown City player/coach Peter Tsekenis, who watched in horror as his side scored first and then capitulated meekly to crash 6-1 to a fired up Central Coast outfit. The Lions defence folded like a pack of cards as the Coasties led by Troy Halpin, ran roughshod over last season's premier.

PENRITH 2
BLUE DEVILS 2

The Blue Devils season hit rock bottom over the weekend as they slipped to last following a 2-2 draw with Penrith Nepean United. Last season's runners up led 2-1 late in the game but allowed revitalised striker Luke Tomich to put away a late equaliser to leave them wallowing in last position on the competition table.



Avid football fan and famous signer John Paul Young was on hand to sing the national anthem before the huge clash between Marconi Stallions and Sydney United

BONNYRIGG 0
A.P.I.A. 1

Bonnyrigg coach John Turner has come out firing in the wake of his team's disappointing 1-0 loss to A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt.

"We trained brilliantly through the week and then they come out and play our worst game of the season," said Turner. "The boys really need to have a good hard look at themselves and I can promise that there will be changes."

PARRAMATTA 2
SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR 0

A controversial clash between Parramatta Eagles defender John Kelso and Sydney Crescent Star goalkeeper Cem Akili proved the turning point in the Eagles 2-0 win on Sunday night.

Akili had earlier saved a penalty from Noel Spencer, but couldn't keep his feet after he clashed with Kelso chasing a loose ball, allowing the home side to score first and set up the win.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
WOLLONGONG 2

A courageous debut performance from former Olympic defender George Souris proved the difference as Wollongong notched just their second win of the season. Souris was inspirational in the Wolves 2-1 win and kept the dangerous Olympic forwards in check to help set up the win which sees former National League champion Olympic drop to 11th.

MANLY UNITED 4
ROCKDALE CITY 3

Manly United's New Zealand international striker Brent Fisher rediscovered his scoring touch with all four goals in his team's drought breaking 4-3 win over Rockdale. Fisher went goalless through the first four rounds, but has bagged five in two games either side of the break, to help lift his club off the bottom of the ladder. A hat trick for Blacktown's Adam Kwasnik means he tops the goalscoring list at an average of better than one a game.

ROUND 6 RESULTS

FIRST GRADE: Penrith Nepean United 2 (P Bennett 46', L Tomich 91') Blue Devils 2 (D Wells 12', A Castro 65'), Central Coast United 6 (S Knight 41/65', N Boogard 48', I Prenzowski 80', P Haynes 82/89') Bankstown City Lions 1 (B Farah 40'), St George Saints 9 (V Savoca 7', D Watkins 8/31/33/51', G Mendez 27', T Balabanel 63/90' Penalty, B Renaud 68') Blacktown City Demons 3 (A Kwasnik 16/45/53'), Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1 (R Younis 65'), Manly United FC 4 (B Fisher 4/40/70/81') Rockdale City Suns 3 (J Aschner 61', N Bosevski 87/90' Penalty), Marconi Stallions 2 (J Kencevski 14', N Carle 75') Sydney United 3 (P Cardozo 17/35', M Jedinak 92'), Parramatta Eagles 2 (J Kelso 63', N Spencer 86') Sydney Crescent Star 0, Sydney Olympic 1 (E Masi 74') Wollongong Wolves 2 (S McGirr 25', A Hughes 32').

GRADE 20: Penrith Nepean United 1 (L Newton 74') Blue Devils 1 (D Leet 4'), Central Coast United 2 (M Mitchell 37', D Cooper 54') Bankstown City Lions 1 (M Borg 76' Penalty), St George Saints 2 (J Kovas 24', N Tavouktsis 35') Blacktown City Demons 2 (A Martino 60/86' Penalty), Bonnyrigg White Eagles vs A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers postponed, Manly United FC 2 (J Funnell 83', S Teghini 86') Rockdale City Suns 1 (K Terkes 34'), Marconi Stallions 0 Sydney United 5 (S Tresoglavic 9', L Glavas 25', T Spencer 31', G Agic 37', D Vidovic 66'), Parramatta Eagles 2 Sydney Crescent Star 0, Sydney Olympic 3 (M Hilton 13', Own Goal 30', R Di Meglio 76m) Wollongong Wolves 2 (E Rink 72m, D Kerr 74m).

TOP GOALSCORERS

As at Sunday 16th January 2005

- 8 Adam Kwasnik (BCD)
- 5 Nick Bosevski (RCS), Labinot Haliti (SU), Ilija Prenzowski (CCU), Brent Fisher (MU)
- 4 Robbie Cattanaach (BD), Tanju Balabanel (SG), Daniel Watkins (SG), Pablo Cardozo (SU)



FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Sydney United	6	5	0	1	20	9	11	15
Blacktown City Demons	6	4	0	2	16	14	2	12
St George Saints	6	3	2	1	14	7	7	11
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	6	3	2	1	5	3	2	11
Bankstown City Lions	6	3	2	1	6	8	-2	11
Central Coast United	6	3	1	2	14	7	7	10
Rockdale City Suns	6	3	1	2	10	8	2	10
Parramatta Eagles	6	2	2	2	10	13	-3	8
Marconi Stallions	6	1	4	1	9	8	1	7
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	6	2	1	3	11	11	0	7
Sydney Olympic	6	2	1	3	8	8	0	7
Wollongong Wolves	6	2	1	3	8	12	-4	7
Penrith Nepean United	6	1	2	3	10	13	-3	5
Sydney Crescent Star	6	1	1	4	8	15	-7	4
Manly United FC	6	1	1	4	6	14	-8	4
Blue Devils	6	0	3	3	8	13	-5	3



GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sydney Olympic	6	6	0	0	19	7	12	18
Australian Institute of Sport	6	5	0	1	18	5	13	15
Central Coast United	7	5	0	2	13	7	6	15
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	6	4	0	2	17	9	8	12
Marconi Stallions	6	4	0	2	13	12	1	12
Blacktown City Demons	6	3	2	1	17	13	4	11
Penrith Nepean United	7	3	2	2	14	12	2	11
Sydney United	6	3	0	3	12	9	3	9
Parramatta Eagles	6	3	0	3	8	8	0	9
Manly United FC	6	3	0	3	6	10	-4	9
Blue Devils	7	2	3	2	14	19	-5	9
St George Saints	6	1	4	1	12	10	2	7
Wollongong Wolves	6	2	0	4	7	13	-6	6
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	6	1	1	4	8	17	-9	4
Bankstown City Lions	7	0	2	5	7	17	-10	2
Rockdale City Suns	6	0	1	5	8	16	-8	1
Sydney Crescent Star	6	0	1	5	7	16	-9	1



Happy Wolves goalscorers Shane McGirr (left) and Adam Hughes (right) celebrate their victory over Sydney Olympic

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ROUND SEVEN FIXTURES

SAT 22 JAN

Home Team	Away Team	Venue	Time
Blue Devils	Parramatta Eagles	Belconnen SC	7.00pm
Blacktown City Demons	Central Coast United	Gabbie Stadium	7.00pm
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	St George Saints	Serbian Centre	7.00pm
Rockdale City Suns	Marconi Stallions	St George Stadium	7.00pm

SUN 23 JAN

Home Team	Away Team	Venue	Time
Bankstown City Lions	Penrith Nepean United	Jensen Park	6.00pm
Sydney Crescent Star	Sydney Olympic	Lidcombe Oval	6.00pm
Wollongong Wolves	Manly Warringah Dolphins	WIN Stadium	6.00pm
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	Sydney United	Lambert Park	6.00pm

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ACTION



WATKINS LEADS SAINTS GOAL FRENZY

A four goal haul by Daniel Watkins, his first goals in the Premier League this season, opened the floodgates for an incredible 12-goal feast as St George put Blacktown City to the sword with an amazing 9-3 victory at St George Stadium last Saturday night.

Watkins led the charge, but it was the slick performance by the entire team which will have pleased coach Manny Spanoudakis.

Coming off a loss to Bankstown in the last game prior to the festive break, St George were keen to make amends for that defeat and attacked Blacktown from the kick-off.

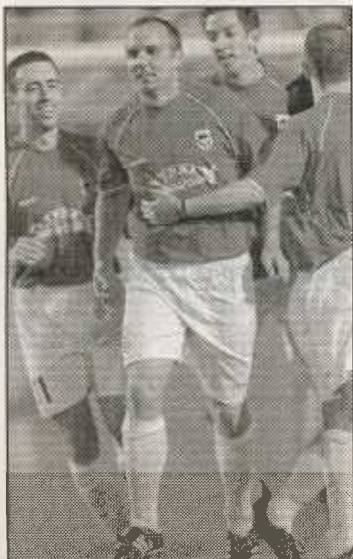
The first goal quickly arrived in the seventh minute when a Gabriel Mendez free-kick on the edge of the box was not fully cleared and Vince Savoca was able to turn and loop the ball into the net, surprising John Crawley in the Demons goal.

Only a minute later and it was 2-0, when Watkins got his first of the night, beating Crawley at the near post.

Blacktown, missing the injured Mark Milligan and Chris Tadrosse, on international duty, from their backline, appeared shell-shocked by the early goals but did well to pull one back through Adam Kwasnik after 16 minutes.

A deep cross from the left appeared to have left Kwasnik with little opportunity, but his header was able to clear Andrew Crews and sneak under the bar from an acute angle.

The goal of the night though, was undoubtedly Mendez's strike midway through the first half which put the Saints 3-1 up. A fine run by Tanju Balabanel, who escaped the clutches of Paul Karbon, resulted in a low cross to an unmarked Mendez, who sweetly hit the ball first time, giving the exposed Crawley no chance.



Daniel Watkins completely dismantled the Demons with a four goal haul for the Saints

	St George Saints	9
	Blacktown City Demons	3

Crawley, who appeared to be carrying an injury, was then replaced by Brody Crane in the Demons goal. It was unfortunate for the young replacement keeper, who failed to control the ball shortly after coming on and was dispossessed by Watkins, who was able to knock the ball into an empty net for the Saints' fourth.

Watkins notched his hat-trick only two minutes later, before Kwasnik reduced the arrears on the half time whistle.

A first half which produced seven goals augured well for the second period and the fans were not disappointed.

The goals kept coming. Watkins hit his fourth and St George's sixth following a goalmouth scramble. Kwasnik, soon to link up with the Central Coast Mariners in the A-League, snared his own hat-trick when he took advantage of a rare Crews error to make the score 6-3.

With goals going in at either end with startling regularity, this was the type of game which could still have provided a shock. However, it was St George who erased any

faint hope of a Blacktown resurgence when Balabanel beat the offside trap to coolly slot under Crane.

Then Brendan Renaud, in space on the left, had time to control before striking a low hard shot on target. A Balabanel penalty in the 90th minute provided the final nail in the Demons coffin.

For St George, it was an important

victory which certainly keeps their season on track. Such a win, their biggest in almost 25 years since beating Canterbury 9-1 back in 1981 when Saints legend Dez Marton graced the Stadium, sees the club move into third position on the table.

Blacktown, for their part, will be unlikely to again defend in such an uncharacteristic manner any time soon.

ST GEORGE SAINTS 9
(D Watkins 8', 31', 33', 51', T Balabanel 63', 90' pen, V Savoca 7', G Mendez 27', B Renaud 68')

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 3
(A Kwasnik 16', 45', 53')
@St George Stadium, Rockdale.

ST GEORGE SAINTS: Andrew Crews, Simon Verrinder, Mirko Juric, Nick Oric, Ivan Zelic (Max Sevaros 77'), Raphael Bove (Tyler Simpson 68'), Vince Savoca, Gabriel Mendez, Brendan Renaud (Alan Wawi 73'), Daniel Watkins, Tanju Balabanel.
Subs not used: Kosta Lagoudakis, Phil Weston.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: John Crawley (Brody Crane 29), Bobby Dragas, Damien Foxe, Jason Connolly (Dakilla Faloon 73'), Paul Karbon, Kain Rastall, Luke Roodenburg, Stephen Kayes (Josh Maguire 45'), Tony Faria, Stewart Petrie, Adam Kwasnik.
Subs not used: Scott Jamieson, Brendan Maroney

Referee: Simon Przydacz

Assistant Referees: Dom Filipovic and Juan Xu

Fourth Official: Ryan Shephard

FISHER FINALLY FIRES

By Paul Goodwin

Four goals from a back-to-form Brent Fisher saw Manly United hang on to beat a competitive Rockdale City Suns at Cromer Park on Friday night.

The scoreline was probably a fair reflection of a game that Manly had in their keeping until a second half revival almost got the visitors back in the hunt.

Manly took a while to settle but took command of the game after a tense opening period and got the lead thanks to some smart work from Mick Williams in the fourth minute.

The midfielder sent Brad Groves through, who in turn, threaded a delightful pass for Fisher to run onto and complete the move with a very tidy finish.

WHO'S HOT: Brent Fisher, who else? Just one goal before this game and now four class strikes that ensured United made off with the points.

WHO'S NOT: John Hutchinson, despite providing a couple of good 'assists' had a patchy game and looked a little below his best.

X-FACTOR: Orhan Dincer, were it not for Fisher's four goal haul, would have been Man of the Match for his industry and back-up for his goal-scoring Kiwi team-mate.

Dincer was everywhere and this was a very impressive effort by the former St George, Crescent Star and Dulwich Hill man in a deeper lying role behind Fisher and Berry.

Rockdale's backline was exposed again in the 40th minute when defender Pascal Julliard won the ball well at the back and sent a long pass to John Hutchinson.

The Manly skipper then gave Fisher the chance to spring the trap and beat the keeper with another deft finish.

Scott Baillie almost grabbed one back for Rockdale a minute later but his shot from inside the box was well blocked by a desperate Alex Wilkinson, who had a strong game for the home team. Rockdale came out for the second half fired up nicely and were desperately unlucky not to score immediately.

Half-time substitute David Harding, who made a huge difference once he took the field, caught the slow Manly defence out when he sent Nick Bosevski through; but the blond striker, with the goal at his mercy, somehow managed to hit the right hand post and the ball came back into the grateful arms of the keeper to keep Manly two goals in front.

That was probably the turning point of the game and while Rockdale did reduce the arrears through Jimmy Aschner in the 61st minute after great work down the left by former Manly favourite, Tony Ju, United were able to extend their lead to 3-1 nine minutes later and another 11 minutes further on, added a fourth, again from Fisher.

Fisher completed his hat trick, after Hutchinson had fed Steve Berry, whose cut-back from the byline was expertly volleyed past John Perosh.

The Rockdale keeper then blundered badly in the 81st minute, when he sent a weak clearance straight to Julliard.

The latter's ball down the left flank for Anthony Martin was cut back to Fisher, who, surrounded by four defenders showed superb control, patience and confidence to

	Manly United FC	4
	Rockdale City Suns	3

drill the ball past the hapless keeper. Rockdale worked hard in the second half and more goals from them came as no surprise.

In the 87th minute, Ju was able to lay on another nice cross from the left, this time for Bosevski to head home clinically from the middle of the goal area.

Finally, a foolish piece of byplay from Manly keeper Tom Willis allowed Bosevski to grab a second, with the last kick of the game from the penalty spot.

Willis had gathered the ball safely from a

corner when under pressure from Aschner, but lashed out unnecessarily and referee Craig Pearce had no choice but to point to the spot.

The official refrained from taking any action against Willis who did not need to react in the way he did and could have suffered stronger sanction. Winning by the odd goal in seven, Manly United FC were not too convincing and were it not for Fisher's return to form they might well have struggled to contain a fiery Rockdale.

Fisher's four goals were brilliantly taken and he never put a foot wrong all night, to the relief of his coach.

Wilkinson, Julliard and Martin all had sound games for Manly while Bosevski, Aschner, and in the second half both Ju and Harding, were in good touch for Rockdale.

Manly coach, Phil Moss, was ecstatic after the win.

"I feel so pleased for 'Fish'. Every player goes through a barren patch but nobody works harder than Brent Fisher at training and in games and he deserves everything he got," Moss enthused.

Losing coach, Ivan Petkovic, felt his side had ignored his warnings of Manly's abilities and nobody played well in the first half.

"Our wide players wanted to push up all the time and this gave Manly far too much room," Petkovic said.

"We did play better in the second half, but maybe we did not do enough during the break and it cost us in the first part of the game."

Cameron Jones came back to training later than the others, after being given time off for a brief honeymoon and Christian Cevenini took off for trials in Singapore, a couple of days before the match.



Brent Fisher: The Kiwi international smashed in all four goals for Manly in their win over the Suns

MANLY UNITED 4
(B Fisher 4', 40', 70', 81')
@Cromer Park, Manly.

Coach: Phil Moss
Formation: 4-3-1-2

Line-up: Tom Willis - Alex Wilkinson, Pascal Julliard, Adam Israel, Anthony Martin - Brad Groves (Andrew Maller 62'), John Hutchinson (C), Michael Williams - Orhan Dincer (Tony Allovic 87'), Steve Berry (James Monie 86'), Brent Fisher
Subs not used: Michael Steell, Matt Gale

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 3
(J Aschner 61', N Bosevski 87', 90' pen)

Coach: Ivan Petkovic

Formation: 3-5-2

Line-up: John Perosh - Richard Plesa (C), Scott Baillie, Paul Bilokapic - Peter Apolevski, Robbie Gomez, Ante Daur (Dave Harding 46'), Cameron Jones (Denis Allkovic 54'), Tony Ju - Nick Bosevski, Jimmy Aschner
Subs not used: Steve Minovski, Michael Cindric, Milan Bosnar
Referee: Craig Pearce

Assistant Referees: Ryan Shephard and Matt Gillett

Fourth Official: Jimmy Barnes

Yellow Cards: Manly United FC: Pascal Julliard; Rockdale City Suns: Nil



NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ACTION

UNITED GO THE EXTRA MILE AS MARCONI CRASH

By Greg Stock

L league leader Sydney United may have taken bragging rights in the local derby, but all the discussions centred around Stallions coach Zlatko Nastevski in the wake of his side's 3-2 loss on Saturday night.

Nastevski declined to comment when quizzed on his side's disappointing performance and faces an anxious week as speculation grows on where the Stallions might be heading for the remainder of the season.

Of most concern to Nastevski would have been the way Marconi fell in a screaming heap after appearing to be in complete control of the match midway through the second half.

United substitute and former Young Socceroo Mile Jedinak bobbed up with an injury time winner to condemn Marconi to its first loss of the campaign.

However, the Stallions have also won only once in the first six rounds and are down in ninth spot. Jedinak was able to bundle a ball from Pablo Cardozo over the line despite defender Mark D'Alessandro appearing to be held by a United player amid the scrumage.

"It was without question the hardest game we have played all season and full credit to Marconi, they could have snatched the game off us in the second half, but they failed to press us hard enough," said United coach Zlatko Arambasic.

With \$15,000 in prize money and a bounty of \$500 per goal, the game started at 100 hundred miles an hour and didn't let up throughout its entirety.

Stallions debutante Jason Kencevski bobbed up with the first goal when he put away a ball from Matthew Thompson before United's forwards could click into gear.

Despite the late withdrawal of guest player Mark Rudan with a groin injury, United played their best football in the first half, with veteran striker Pablo Cardozo picking up a double.

He put away a cross from Matthew Langdon for goal number one in the 17th minute and then slotted home a pass from Jimmy Bakis from a tight angle for number two, ten minutes shy of the break.

The Stallions equalised amid a second half purple patch when United goalkeeper Liam Reddy found a free kick from Matthew Thompson too hot to handle and Nick Carle was able to put away the loose ball.

After dominating the last 20 minutes of the game, Marconi were made to pay for squandering a succession of chances as they watched Jedinak manufacture an injury time winner.

"They are probably the best side I have played against so far and they forced us to play at our best to win," said Arambasic.

"We struggled in the midfield during the second half and gave them all the momentum when Peter Zorbas went off, but full credit to my guys.

"They dug deep and found a winner and picking up an extra two points in games like this could really be the difference in a close competition."

Arambasic could be without energetic Zorbas indefinitely, revealing the midfielder will be going for scans on his knee



Marconi Stallions

2



Sydney United

3

this week following a nasty collision with the Stallions Dean Heffernan.

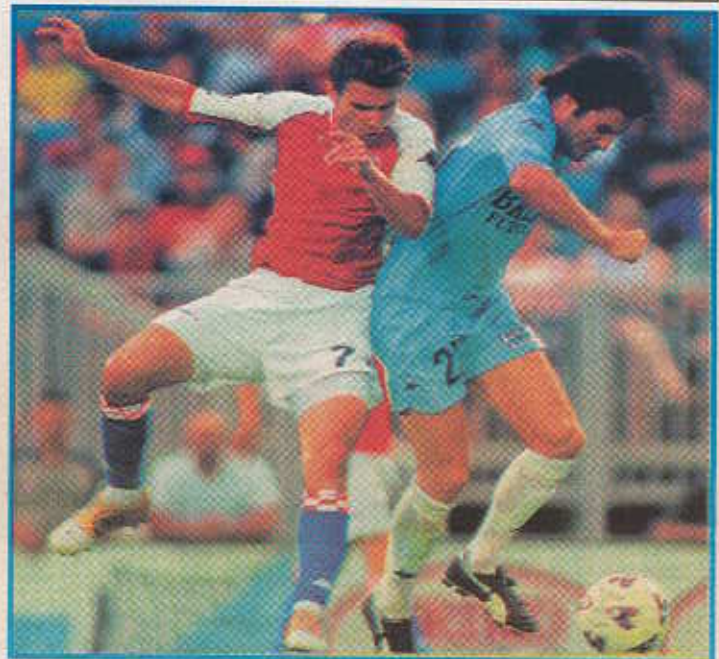
Striker Jimmy Bakis is also in some doubt for the A.P.I.A. match next Sunday after picking up a cork early in the second half.

While Arambasic worries about the condition of his stars, Nastevski will be contemplating his next move as he seeks to transform his embattled club and lift it from the bottom eight.

WHO'S HOT: Jason Kencevski, the Stallions new signing from the Illawarra showed enough to suggest he will make an impact once he gets used to the pace of the game.

WHO'S NOT: Labinot Haliti had been the toast of United pre-Christmas, but he was well down on form and failed to fire.

X-FACTOR: Mile Jedinak may yet score more goals in his career, but there will be none more important than this one. Coming off the substitute's bench, the former youth international was clinical in finding the net just when it seemed a draw was in the offing.



Sydney United's Labinot Haliti (left) shown tussling with Marconi's Dean Heffernan (right)



Stallions players shown celebrating a debut goal for Jason Kencevski



Goal time: Sydney United's ace marksman Pablo Cardozo (far right) shown scoring one of his two goals in his side's thrilling three-two victory over rivals the Marconi Stallions

MARCONI STALLIONS 2
(J Kencevski 14', N Carle 75')

SYDNEY UNITED 3
(P Cardozo 19' 35', M Jedinak 89')
@Marconi Stadium, Bossley Park.

MARCONI STALLIONS
Coach: Zlatko Nastevski
Formation: 4-4-2
Line-up: Michael Herbert, Luke Casserly, Paul Cotte, Dean Heffernan (Fernando Pellegrino 73'), Paul O'Grady - Matthew Thompson, Chris Cop (Vince Ripepi 84'), Leo Carle, Mark D'Alessandro - Nick Carle, Jason Kencevski (Bruce Djite 87').

SYDNEY UNITED
Coach: Zlatko Arambasic
Formation: 4-4-2
Line-up: Liam Reddy, Ante Juric, Joe Vrkic, David Huxley, Peter Markovic - Peter Zorbas (Mile Jedinak 89'), Matthew Langdon, Andrew Durante (Anthony Doumanis 81'), Pablo Cardozo - Labinot Haliti, Jimmy Bakis (Franco Parisi 61').

Yellow Cards: Cotte (MS) 16' Durante (SU) 19' Reddy (SU) 45' Pellegrino (MS) 75'

Referee: Peter Vrkovski
Assistant Referees: Jonathan Streater and Craig O'Neill
Fourth Official: Brandon Skinner

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ACTION



SOURIS ENJOYS SWEET RETURN

By Paul Goodwin

Two sides desperate for points came face-to-face at Kogarah's Oki Jubilee Stadium and the hungrier, visiting Wollongong Wolves prevailed 2-1 against a youthful and unfortunate Sydney Olympic.

The first 25 minutes of the game were keenly contested, with neither side making much impression, though, with the wind at their backs Wollongong always looked capable of a breakthrough.

It came in the 25th minute.

George Souris, who was up against his former club and making his debut for the Wolves, was fired up and tackling as if his life depended on it.

He won the ball deep and then mid-field maestro Mineo Boniteg took over, finding Shane McGirr with a probing ball that had the home defence at sixes and sevens.

McGirr did well to shake off the attentions of a number of defenders and slot the ball past Brett Hughes from close range with a deft touch.

Three minutes later and the visitors were almost two goals up.

After a corner on the left from Michael

Clare, a series of pinball-like snapshots inside the box eventually saw the ball deflected into the grateful arms of Hughes.

This reprieve for Olympic lasted only another four minutes as the Wolves soon fashioned the simplest of second goals.

Shielding his eyes from the sun after receiving a nice pass from centre field, wingman Daniel Aliffi got the better of his marker with panache before sending a first time cross to the far post from out wide on the right.

There to meet it, seemingly unchallenged, was Adam Hughes, whose stooping header beat the Wollongong man's namesake with ease, as the ball crept past the balding custodian and just inside the left hand post.

It was a precious goal for Adrian Alston's men and one they needed badly with the whole second half ahead of them and a strong wind to face, having used it to their best advantage for the first 45 minutes.

Once Olympic brought on Tarek Elrich, early in the second half and pushed Paul Kohler forward, things began to happen for the home side

A backs-to-the wall Wolves were

	Sydney Olympic	1
	Wollongong Wolves	2

caught out badly in the 74th minute.

Elrich chased a ball that looked like disappearing over the right hand byline, but the speedy flanker was able to cut the ball back to an unattended Esala Masi in the middle.

Masi had time to measure his shot and score the most clinical of goals from ten yards out and make a real game of it from that point on.

Masi had a strong game, but despite having the Wolves under a great deal of pressure for most of the half the Olympic attack could not manage another goal, thanks to sterling work from Souris, Blake and the industrious Wolves' mid-field.

The Wolves relied on getting the ball up long to McGirr and they nearly snatched a third goal in the 82nd minute.

Boniteg pushed up and after winning the ball well, fed Clare who looked set to score, only to be forced wide by keeper Hughes.

The shot eventually came from an impossibly tight angle, but Shane Lyons still had to clear it off the line though the major share of the game had taken place at the other end with Masi, Kohler and Elrich striving hard for that elusive equaliser.

The Souris-inspired and Ben Blake-captained Wolves claimed their second win of the season, in what is shaping up as a very even competition. Blake's debut as captain was one he will long remember.

Three valuable points for the visitors and three more lost by an Olympic side missing the experience of Andre Gumprecht and the effervescence of Zenon Caravella (who has asked for his player clearance) on this occasion.

WHO'S HOT: George Souris, obviously needing no encouragement, was inspirational against the side he left before Christmas and could not have done any more to assist his side through to a well deserved victory.

WHO'S NOT: Michael Beauchamp looked sluggish at times in an Olympic side beginning to run short on experience right now.

X-FACTOR: The wind played its part in the first half as the Wolves raced to a deserved half time lead; but they had to pull out all the stops to deny Olympic after the break once they had the same advantage. It was probably the early use of that wind, especially in snaring the second goal, which decided the trend of the game.



Paul Kohler (left) receives a kick in the head by Wolves defender Ben Blake

Blake and Souris both enjoyed their roles in the game.

"We had to make a lot of clearances out of defence and perhaps our passing wasn't the best, but we were intent on relieving the pressure and it worked for us," said Souris.

"We worked as a team out there," chimed in Blake.

"When Alvin Ceccoli was in the team, a lot of things went through him, but we had to do it a bit differently tonight. We

all had to work together and for each other."

This was the team's first game without Ceccoli, their former captain.

Winning coach, Adrian Alston, left the stadium as soon as the boys came back into the dressing room, knowing that the game had been won but the campaign was far from over.

His very young side, bolstered by the experience of Souris, Blake, Dominic Longo and Boniteg had won the day.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
(E Masi 74)

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 2
(S McGirr, A Hughes 32)
@Oki Jubilee Stadium, Kogarah.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC:
Coach: John Doyle
Formation: 3-2-4-1
Line-up: Brett Hughes (C) - Michael Beauchamp, Damon Collina (Tarek Elrich 56), Peter McPherson - Paul Kohler, Wayne O'Sullivan - Shane Lyons, Carlo Musumeci, Marino Musumeci (Nick Stavroulakis 81), Matt Gordon - Esala Masi
Subs not used: Sam Emmanouil, Steve Baveas, Bishara Stefan.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES:
Coach: Adrian Alston
Formation: 4-4-1-1
Line-up: Daniel Beltrame - George Souris, Dominic Longo, Robbie Cazzoli (Matt Werakso 90), Ben Blake (C) - Daniel Aliffi, Adam Hughes, Mineo Boniteg, Chad Bishop (Craig Morton 80) - Michael Clare - Shane McGirr
Subs not used: Scott Whalan, Patrick Cappuccino, Tynan Diaz
Referee: Simon Micallef
Assistant Referees: Damian Wanstead and Jason Blackwood
No Fourth Official:
Yellow Cards: Sydney Olympic: Paul Kohler 40, Peter McPherson 44, Michael Beauchamp 60, Matt Gordon 82; Wollongong City: Daniel Aliffi 24



Wolves defender George Souris (right) played 'out of his skin' against his former club and was delighted with the victory over the hapless Blues last Sunday afternoon



NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ACTION

COAST ROASTS LIONS

By Paul Goodwin

A smart and cohesive Central Coast machine steamrolled their way to a sensational 6-1 win in their first game of the season in front of their supporters at Express Advocate Stadium.

They encountered attractive opposition in the shape of last season's Grand Final winners, and previously unbeaten Bankstown City Lions, who took the lead after a drab opening half hour.

The game sprang to life with a superb individual goal from Lions' defender, Buddy Farah, but after that it all went wrong for the visitors whose defence crumbled under the home team's onslaught.

On a weekend of high scoring, the Coast netted a succession of second half goals to utterly destroy Bankstown and notch their third straight win.

Farah's wonderfully inspired long-range

grass-skimming shot that angled across Coast keeper Matthew Trott in the 40th minute, signalled the start of the fun and games. Both keepers began to be tested by the improvisational efforts of their quick-thinking opponents.

Trott managed to pull off some good saves, with stout assistance from capable defenders Matt Bingley, Josh Mitchell and especially Nigel Boogard.

Zlatko Josevski, on the other hand, was caught out time and time again by lobbed balls and clever thinking from the Coast forwards and had a game he would want to forget.

Boogard, having effected some crucial tackles to deny Nahuel Arrarte and Marc Hoenselaars in the heart of the Coast defence, bobbed up at the other end to give his side a 48th minute lead. His looping header crept just under the bar after Mitchell Prentice had crossed from the right following on from a corner on the left.

WHO'S HOT: Joe Schirripa buzzed around all afternoon out wide and looked a class act overshadowing stars like Troy Halpin and Ilija Prenzowski. He was involved in several of the goals.

WHO'S NOT: Zlatko Josevski, the Lions' keeper, would be the first to admit that he did not have one of his better games. Once the Coast had scored he

had no answer to their shooting prowess and like the rest of his defence, wilted under the constant pressure.

X-FACTOR: Sound defence from Central Coast, highlighted by a great display from Nigel Boogard who made many important tackles, was the basis for this huge win.

	Central Coast United	6
	Bankstown City Lions	1

Bamboozled by this goal Bankstown never recovered. They had already surrendered their lead within a minute when Shane Knight ran through to meet a lifted ball from deep by Joel Thiessen.

The Lions might have drawn level in the 62nd minute when Farah again charged forward, but his low drive was brilliantly palmed away by Trott and hastily cleared.

After that, the makeshift front force of Hoenselaars and Arrarte, replacing the injured Sean Babic and the A-League-bound Saso Petrovski, could do nothing to endanger the Coast's grip on the game.

Knight extended the home side's lead in the 65th minute when he latched onto a smart cross from Ilija Prenzowski from the right and stabbed home from close range.

In the 80th minute, Scott Thomas lobbed the ball forward for an unmarked Prenzowski to clip the ball over the advancing Josevski. Two minutes later, Joe Schirripa's low ball fired in from the right, got past Josevski again, thanks to the slightest of touches from the lurking substitute Peter Haynes.

Haynes completed the rout in the 89th minute when he glanced a header past the

keeper at the near post from Schirripa's free kick wide on the right.

Everything was right about Central Coast's game on this occasion while Bankstown seemed to have forgotten the lessons they learned about defending from their departed coach, Andy Papoulas.

Grant Lee, the Coach boss, was excited by the quality of the win.

"We played some great football out there," Lee said.

"My job now will be to let them all enjoy the moment and then start all over again

next week, as we have some tough games ahead of us and Blacktown will certainly be ready for us."

Lee was referring to the Demons' heavy loss at St George, which will make them doubly-determined to regain winning form at the expense of his Coast side next Saturday.

Bankstown are not scoring enough goals this season and after a mean defence early in the campaign, their goal difference has taken a real beating after this match.

CENTRAL COAST UNITED 6
(S Knight 41/65, P Haynes 82/89, N Boogard 48, I Prenzowski 80)
Coach: Grant Lee
Formation: 3-5-2
Line-up: Matthew Trott - Nigel Boogard, Matthew Bingley (C), Josh Mitchell - Scott Thomas, Joel Thiessen, Mitchell Prentice, Troy Halpin (Gareth Jenkins 78), Joe Schirripa - Shane Knight (Peter Haynes 74), Ilija Prenzowski (Darren Cooper 86)
Subs not used: Scott Carter, David Brewer
BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: 1
(B Farah 40)
Player-coach: Peter Tsikenis

Formation: 4-4-2
Line-up: Zlatko Josevski - Buddy Farah (Devrim Huseyin 74), Chad Gibson, Richard Lukic (C), Mathew Presello - Steve Liavas (Dimitri Nicolaou 50), George Nohra, Peter Tsikenis, Shane Webb (Alex Trpkoski 64) - Marc Hoenselaars, Nahuel Arrarte
Subs not used: Ivan Kovacevic, Matt Borg.
Referee: Matthew Breeze
Assistant Referees: Sharon O'Neill and Adel Soliman
Fourth Official: Adam Suz
Yellow Cards: Central Coast United: Nil, Bankstown City: Nil

EAGLES FLY HIGH OVER STAR

Noel Spencer missed a penalty, but still ended up on the score-sheet as Parramatta added to Sydney Crescent Star's woes by beating them 2-0 at Melita Stadium.

The game started with both teams looking for weaknesses in the other's armour but at half time the game was still locked at nil all.

The second stanza was barely ten minutes old when during an Eagles sortie Richard Cardozo was brought down

in the area by a defender's crude tackle. The referee had no hesitation in awarding Parramatta a penalty. Spencer stepped up, but Star keeper Cem Akili saved the weak kick.

The Parramatta supporters didn't have to wait much longer to see their side go to the front.

In the 63rd minute there was a corner from the left side taken by Ben Delicata which was spilt by Akili and John Kelso spun and put the ball wide of a defender

to open the Eagles' account.

Crescent Star pushed forward to try and get an equaliser but Parramatta were holding tight and were alert for counter attacks which were coming thick and fast.

One of these counters resulted in the Eagles doubling their score. From a long ball, Spencer was ready and he outpaced the defence and lobbed the keeper to make the final score 2-0 in favour of the Eagles.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 2
(J Kelso 63, N Spencer 86)
SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR 0
@Melita Stadium, South Granville.
PARRAMATTA EAGLES: Peter Munsie, Michael Mouyis, John Kelso, Noel Spencer, Matthew O'Shea, Matthew Clowes, Richard Cardozo (Nathan Burns), Andrew Kane (Michael Debono) Nathan Rivera, Michael Brown, Ben Delicata.
SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR: Cem Akil, Angelo Petros, Daniel Willoughby, Terry Atsas, Sargun Dawd, Steve Karavetakis, Manuel Delahougue, Leigh Gunn, Omar Obaid (Aidin Hadzic), Askin Oygur, Freddy Umili (Anthony Hartshorn).
Referee: S. Deloski.
Assistant Referees: Stephen Duckett & Stephen McCauley.
Fourth Official: Sandro Pericicari

STINGY TIGERS STUN BONNYRIGG

Bonnyrigg welcomed back star strikers Michael Baird and Bobby Despotovski from injuries, but that didn't save the White Eagles from another disastrous home defeat.

In a round of remarkable scoring, A.P.I.A. needed just the one second half goal to take maximum points from an

slumping Eagles side which has lost three in a row, including two at home, where they have yet to win.

A.P.I.A. included former Eagle Aaron Burgess to strengthen their attack, the most goal-shy in the competition, with just five goals in six games. However, the Tigers are in the top four because they possess by far the stingiest defence,

ers Vuko Tomasevic and David Reid had very quiet games and the lack of service starved Bobby Despotovski.

X-FACTOR: Paul Dee was instrumental in the Tigers' victory with his good distribution.

conceding only three goals, less than half the amount of the next meanest sides, St George and Central Coast.

The game was played at a very slow pace with both sides not willing to press forward, thus waiting for each other to make the first mistake.

Robert Younis forced a good first half save from Glen Moss and hit the crossbar with a free kick after the break, before finally finding the net.

The winner came mid-way through the second half when Norman Tome delivered to the far post to Younis, who out-jumped David Reid to beat Moss.

Bonnyrigg butchered some great chances, especially when Despotovski

went one on one with Bolton, but sprayed his shot wide. Tigers keeper Clint Bolton twice foiled Baird, who

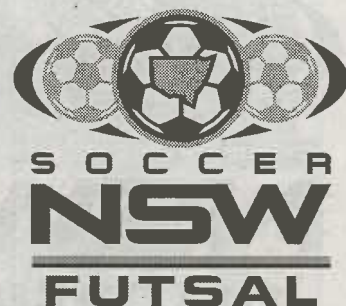
came off the bench with 25 minutes to go.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLE 0
A.P.I.A. LEICHHARDT TIGERS . . . 1
(R Younis 65)
@Serbian Centre, Bonnyrigg.
BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: Glen Moss, Sasha Ujesenovic (Mikrod Simonovic), David Petrovic, Tayfun Davrimol, Jack Sobczyk, Darren McDonald, Bobby Despotovski, Joe Bruni, Talian Martin (Michael Baird), Vuko Tomasevic, David Reid (Wayne Heath).
Subs Not Used: Mathew Hunter, Darko Goreski
A.P.I.A. LEICHHARDT TIGERS: Clint Bolton, Paul Dee, Robbie Stanton, Nathan Moulds, Sam La Rocca, James Stubbs-Mills, Norman Tome, Robert Younis, Peter Peralta, Andrew Clark, Aaron Burgess (Jorg Dierkes).
Subs Not Used: Steve Angelov, Michael Galluzzo, Jim Nikas
Referee: Alex Spiroski
Assistant Referees: Ray Isaac and Gareth Askham
Fourth Official: Atina Stibinger

WHO'S HOT: The A.P.I.A. defence gave Bonnyrigg not a sniff at all in the first 45 minutes and in the end effectively delivered a great result to coach Les de Celis.

WHO'S NOT: The Eagles midfield-

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING STRIKE IN THE A.C.T.



New South Wales has scooped the pool at the week-long National Futsal Championships played in Canberra last week.

Sixteen finals were played last Friday at the AIS in front of a 3000 crowd. NSW teams were in 12 of the finals and won nine.

As a result, NSW won the trophy for the champion

state, unseating the ACT which had held the title for the past two years.

It was a great result for NSW Futsal, the new unified body that came into existence in September last year. NSW had two teams in all age categories playing under the new nicknames Thunder and Lightning.

The National Futsal Championship Roll of Honour

10 boys NSW Thunder 6 v NSW Lightning 2	Open men ACT Cobras 3 v Queensland City 1
11 boys NSW Thunder 7 v ACT Cobras 5	12 girls ACT Cobras 5 Southern Country NSW 1
12 boys NSW Thunder 9 v ACT Cobras 0	13 girls NSW Thunder 3 v ACT Cobras 1
13 boys NSW Thunder 3 v Victoria Jets 3 (NSW Thunder won in penalty shoot out 10-9)	14 girls NSW Thunder 2 v ACT Cobras 0
14 boys Solomon Islands 5 v ACT Cobras 1	15 girls NSW Thunder 2 v ACT Cobras 0
15 boys NSW Thunder 6 v NSW Lightning 0	16 girls ACT Cobras 5 v NSW Thunder 2
16 boys ACT Cobras 4 v NSW Thunder 1	Youth girls NSW Thunder 4 v NSW Lightning 1
Youth men Victoria 2 v ACT Cobras 1	Open women Queensland City 0 v 0 NSW Thunder (NSW lost in penalty shoot out 4-2)



The hugely successful NSW team, which won a staggering nine titles at the National Futsal Championships in Canberra last weekend.

LATE HEARTBREAK FOR WINLESS DEVILS

The Blue Devils were denied their first win of the season with almost the last kick of the Premier League clash with Penrith Nepean United at Cook Park.

The hard fought contest ended in a 2-2 draw, but a last gasp equalising goal to PNU could not hide the fact this was a rarely entertaining game.

Blue Devils came to Cook Park pre-

pared to back themselves and looked the more fluent of the two sides in the first half. They should have had the game wrapped up by half time and it was this wasting of opportunities that eventually cost them all three points.

"We played some of our best football of the season and quite frankly, Penrith were lucky to get away with it," Blue Devils coach Chris Tanzey said.

"We did not convert our chances in the second half and there was always the possibility that Penrith would snatch another. The fact they did it deep into stoppage time was very disappointing."

The Devils scored first through Dustin Wells, a powerful right foot drive into the top corner of the net, and held that lead at half time.

The first chance for Penrith

Nepean came in the 21st minute after a corner taken by Glenn McPherson saw Trent Worrell's effort cleared off the line: From that moment until half time, Blue Devils had four clear chances to increase their lead and kill off the game as a contest.

Along with the chances created in the first half, there was some very ordinary football from both sides and it was obvious that for Penrith to salvage anything from the game they would certainly need to lift their performance.

They certainly started in the right fashion with Peter Bennett equalising with a scrambled goal only seconds after the restart.

Alex Castro restored the visitors lead in the 65th minute with a well-taken header from a Robbie Cattinach cross. Castro won a tackle in midfield, sent the ball wide and was in the penalty area to receive it again.

Penrith pushed forward and created a couple of chances before equalising in the final minute of play.

A ball into the box by Luke O'Connell created some confusion and Luke Tomich slotted away the vital goal from close range.

Penrith coach Tony Rassmussen was happy to get a share of the points, but did express his overall disappointment at the performance of the home side.

"The first half was unacceptable, however I am pleased the boys stuck it out in the second half and I was confident with some decent possession we could

equalise," Rassmussen said.

New Blue Devils signing Robbie Hooker came off the bench in the final 20 minutes and did enough to show he will be an asset to the club in the coming weeks.

I am pleased with the effort put in by the team and in no way can I criticise their determination," Tanzey said.

"I am just becoming frustrated we have not been able to chalk up our first win."



Penrith Nepean Utd

2



Blue Devils

2



Penrith's Peter Bennett (right) scored the opening goal in their 2-2 draw against the Blue Devils

PENRITH NEPEAN UTD 2
(P Bennett 46', L Tomich 91')

BLUE DEVILS 2
(D Wells 12', A Castro 65')
@ John Crehan Park, Cringila

PENRITH NEPEAN UNITED: Chad Taylor, Ryan Noble, Luke Boyd, Peter Bennett, Nathan Fleetwood, Luke Tomich, Luke O'Connell, Roger Galayini, Trent Worrell, Jason Silbertas (Chad Lewis 63), Glenn McPherson (Danny Hinton 81) (Patrick Gatt for Danny Hinton 92).

Subs not used: Ivan Neceveski, Daniel Wells.

BLUE DEVILS: Nathan Denham, Lee Pietrukowski, Alex Castro, Elliot Zwangobani, Robbie Cattinach (Robbie Hooker 75), Daniel Macor (Paul Ivanic 80), David Arranz, Mike Katz, Dustin Wells (86), Anthony Gallozzi, Steve Hayes.

Subs not used: Ian Waldon, Alex Skaines.

Yellow Cards: Penrith, Peter Bennett 73, Trent Worrell 92.



A YEAR IN REVIEW - PART 4

NOVEMBER

The Soccer NSW Board declared the composition of competitions for all divisions of Senior Men's State League Football for the 2005 Winter Season.

SUPER LEAGUE: Canterbury Marrickville Olympic, Dulwich Hill, Fairfield Bulls, FC Bossy Liverpool, Fraser Park, Granville Rage, Hajduk Wanderers United, Hurstville City Minotaurs, Hurstville ZSC, Macarthur Rams, Northern Tigers, Stanmore Hawks, Sutherland Sharks, Sydney University.

DIVISION ONE: Bathurst '75, Belmore Hercules, Blacktown Spartans, Camden Tigers, Fairfield City Lions, Gladesville Spirit United, Hills United, Inter Lions, Mt Druitt Town Rangers, Mt Pritchard, Ryde City, Schofield Scorpions, White City.

DIVISION TWO: Auburn Star, Balmain SC, Greenisland SC, Hakoah, Kellyville Kolts, Prospect United, Springwood SC, Sydney Cedars SC, The Wanderers, UNSW SC.

DIVISION THREE: Colo Colo, East Coast Magic, Gazy Lansvale SC, Gladesville United, Hawkesbury City, Lithgow Workmen, Luddenham United, Roosters FC, Trasandinos.

Extra relegation

The Soccer NSW Board decided to impose a one-off season of additional relegation spots through the main men's competitions.

With the bottom three clubs of the NSW Premier League already liable for relegation, the knock-on effect saw the same regime for the 2005 Winter Super League 12-team competition.

To move to a 14 team NSW Premier League, three clubs are liable for relegation in this current season, with only one Winter Super League club eligible for promotion.

"The Board and a special Premier League task force carefully considered the strategic options and decided that 16 clubs is just too many," said the Soccer NSW President.

"If you have 16 clubs that's 30 home and away rounds before finals, extending the season by two months. This would have an enormous knock-on effect on availability of grounds and referees, not to mention the economic issues involved."

Therefore, the 2005 Winter Super League must also have three clubs liable for relegation, so to avoid expansion to 16.

In Division One State League, which is a 14 team competition, one team will be promoted to Winter Super League, and two teams relegated to Division Two State League, subject to criteria.

In Division Two State League, a 12 team competition, one team will be promoted to Division One State League, and one team will be relegated to Division Two State League, subject to criteria.

In Division Three State League, a 10-team competition, one team will be promoted to Division Two State League, subject to criteria.

Birth of Sydney FC

"In the years to come the success of Sydney FC will vindicate our enthusiasm and confidence to link the grassroots to professional soccer. This is a once in a lifetime chance to rejuvenate soccer in Sydney." With those words the President of Soccer NSW, Mr Tom Doumanis, lauded the birth of Sydney FC.

Sydney FC won the franchise for Sydney in the A-League, the new national competition launched by the Australian Soccer Association.

Vale Johnny Warren

With great sadness, the Board of Soccer NSW joined with the soccer family in mourning the passing of Johnny Warren, who died on Saturday 6 November after a long battle with cancer.

"Johnny Warren was a true champion of the world game," said the President of Soccer NSW, Mr Tom Doumanis. "He was a champion player who represented Australia at its only World Cup finals appearance in 1974, and he was a champion of the cause of soccer, a passionate advocate of the game in this country."

In 12 seasons with his beloved St George, Johnny featured in six NSW State League Grand Finals (winning three), finished as Premiers once and as premierships runners up seven times, and won two State League (Ampol) Cups.

He could not have ended his playing career at St George in a more glorious fashion as he scored the sealing goal in St George's 4-2 NSW Grand Final victory

over Sydney Hakoah in 1974.

His Socceroo career commenced in 1965 when he played in a 0-0 draw with Cambodia in November. By 1967 he was the captain of the national team, and he played a starring role in Australia's victory in the 1967 Vietnam National Day tournament, Australia's first international trophy, won in a war ravaged Saigon.

In 1969 he led the Aussies on a gruelling World Cup campaign, where Australia took on Japan, South Korea, Zimbabwe and Israel in an exhaustingly hectic qualifying series, losing out on qualifying for the 1970 World Cup at the last hurdle.

In 1970 he captained the Australians on an extensive tour of Asia and Europe, which included memorable victories against the likes of Iran, Israel and Greece, before a 15 month break from the national team due to a bad knee injury.

He played in qualifying matches for the 1974 World Cup, where Australia reached the finals tournament for its only time. At West Germany '74 he played in the 2-0 loss to East Germany, where he suffered a foot injury which ruled him out of Australia's two remaining World Cup games. After playing 62 internationals for Australia, he retired from the national team.

Following his playing career he embarked on a 30 year journey of teaching, preaching and reaching out to spread the word of the real football in Australia and beyond.

Plenty of heat in Champion of Champions

A fortnight's delay because of a wash-out did nothing to take the edge off the drama and tension of the Soccer NSW Champion of Champions Grand Final Day.

The 16 matches were played on Sunday 7 November in good conditions, with no sign of the rain that left Valentine Sports Park waterlogged on the weekend of 23/24 October.

This was the big day for 32 amateur teams from across the State. The 16 matches from under 10 boys through to over 35 men and under 12 girls to all-age women will crown the Champion of Champions of each age division. All of these teams have won their district championships, then progressed through several knock-out rounds to the Grand Final.

FIFA World Cup in Manly

The Manly-Warringah football fraternity was fortunate to have a glittering prize in their midst at the Manly United season launch.

With thanks to Avaya, a FIFA World Cup Partner, in conjunction with FIFA, the FIFA World Cup trophy was on show.

The trophy was the star attraction at the glittering event, along with Olympic swimming superstar Ian Thorpe and ex-Socceroo Robbie Slater.

First for Cerebral Palsy

The Inaugural National Cerebral Palsy soccer championships were held at the Sydney Academy of Sport at Narrabeen. There was a total of 10 past or current members of the Australian Cerebral Palsy Team playing.

The championship was held as a three match series between NSW and QLD as they are the only states at this stage which have teams. The matches were extremely close and produced a high level of soccer. The results of the matches were as follows: Match 1 - NSW 2 QLD 2, Match 2 - QLD 2 NSW 1, Match 3 - NSW 3 QLD 1.

Most Valuable Player was Brett Sharrock from NSW.

Hall of Fame

Former NSW Soccer Federation President, Secretary and General Manager, Peter Thorne was one of 11 inductees into the Australian Soccer Association Hall of Fame.

Other inductees included the former Socceroo captain and current national team assistant coach Graham Arnold and former Socceroos Ian Gray and Jack Reilly.

The full list of inductees for 2004 was Graham Arnold, Jack Reilly, Jack Hughes, Todd Clarke, Ian Gray, Sue Monteath (all players), Jane Oakley, Peter Thorne, Gordon Dunster, Roy Druery, Fred Hutchinson (all non-players).

Fairfax Media Partnership

Soccer NSW announced a Media Partnership with Fairfax Community Newspapers and Torch Publishing to promote the game across Sydney.

In short, the partnership will deliver guaranteed one page of advertising and editorial coverage for Soccer NSW activities in 14 Fairfax and Torch newspapers with a circulation of more than 800,000 Sydney homes each week and a readership of 1.6 million.

The partnership is structured so that a second page of coverage can be devoted to grassroots soccer in each

paper's circulation area.

Fairfax and Torch are eager to establish good relationships with Clubs and Associations, from the semi-professional Premier League level to grassroots soccer.

"This is a breakthrough for soccer in this State," said the President of Soccer NSW, Mr Tom Doumanis.

"The partnership will give us more mainstream media coverage, in keeping with our massive numbers and popularity. But the real value will come from working with committed media companies who share our vision for soccer."

Doumanis said the media partnership would focus on promotion of the 2004-05 NSW Premier League season and the booming grassroots of 150,000 amateur players and over 500 clubs in Sydney.

DECEMBER

Football or soccer?

What's the name of our game? That became a hot topic for soccer fans (or should it be football fans) across Australia.

The sad passing of Socceroo legend Johnny Warren sparked a fresh debate. Johnny had long held the view that the game should be known as "football", the common name around the world.

Shortly after Johnny's passing, the Australian Soccer Association flagged its intention to promote the name "football". Soccer NSW directors discussed the proposed change of name from 'soccer' to 'football' at the most recent Board meeting.

As a precaution, the Soccer NSW Vice President, Mr Jim Forrest, moved that "NSW Football Association" be registered as a business name owned by Soccer NSW. This was agreed by the Board.

The ultimate decision will depend on the mood of the soccer/football family. The Board further agreed that a "straw" poll be conducted by way of ballot at the Annual General Meeting to gauge the mood of the membership regarding a change of the name from "soccer" to "football".

The debate will open some interesting historical questions. The term "soccer" is a derivative of "association", emanating from the early days when the full name "Association football" was abbreviated to football or soccer.

Will Socceroos become Footballroos? And what about the hundreds of clubs, registered business names, letterheads, websites and the innumerable uses of the word "soccer"? Stay tuned.

Soccer NSW changes position on Sydney FC ownership

Soccer NSW reaffirmed its support for Sydney FC and the Hyundai A-League, Australia's new national soccer competition.

Speaking at the 2004 Annual General Meeting of Soccer NSW, Tom Doumanis, told members that the success of the Hyundai A-League was pivotal to the future growth and prosperity of Australian soccer.

"Sydney FC and the Hyundai A-League can call on the support of the 32 Associations, 700 clubs and over 200,000 players of the Soccer NSW family," said Mr Doumanis.

"We're all looking forward to the Hyundai A-League kick off and will do all we can to help Sydney FC become a huge success."

Doumanis told the meeting that Soccer NSW would not proceed with a proposal to be a part of the ownership structure of Sydney FC.

In other news, the Soccer NSW Board of Directors has a new member following elections at the AGM.

George Jackson, the President of the Bankstown City Lions, was elected to the Soccer NSW Board. He previously served as a director of the former NSW Soccer Federation.

Jim Ronis was re-elected and his new term will take him to 20 years continuous service at Board level with Soccer NSW and the former NSW Soccer Federation.

Ray Tweedie and David Goodman were re-elected unopposed.

All four will serve three-year terms on the 10-member Board.

After six years on the Boards of Soccer NSW and the former NSW Soccer Federation, Bobby Clark was unsuccessful in seeking re-election.

"We will miss Bobby's contribution very much," said Doumanis. "He was an energetic and forthright director and I wholeheartedly thank him for his work for the cause of soccer in NSW."

Merrick excited about Victory prospects

In December, the Melbourne Victory Football Club appointed Ernie Merrick, the country's highest qualified football coach, as the senior coach for its inaugural season.

To some, the appointment was a surprise, as the general public knows little of the modest coach, having been out of club football for over a decade.

However, the examination of Ernie's coaching curriculum vitae suggests he may well be streets ahead of his peers. After successfully fighting off the challenges of established NSL coaches, including title-winner, Nick Theodorakopoulos, Merrick and the Melbourne Victory Football Club agreed to a three-year deal.

John Bonacci caught up with Merrick early in the New Year, and chatted about the excitement surrounding the launch of the Melbourne Victory and the coming A-League.

Ernie, congratulations on your appointment with the Melbourne Victory. What was the deciding factor in leaving the VIS to manage A-League team, the Melbourne Victory?

First of all, for the first time it looks as though the Football Federation of Australia have got things right regarding the organisation and management of the Hyundai A-League. Secondly, the people involved in the Melbourne Victory are very impressive people and they wanted to do things right from the start.

They wanted to have a program that was extensive in nature with the view to bringing in not only good 20 year olds, but also good senior players in a mix that aimed to provide longevity for the club. Therefore, the quality of people at Melbourne Victory, the set-up of the league, and the possibilities offered to get in at ground level to select players with Gary Cole and access services at the VIS all had an influence on my decision.

You have been at the Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS) for over a decade now. How difficult do you anticipate a return to the rigors of club football?

I don't anticipate difficulty at all. While I was at the VIS I had very good support that most clubs were unable to offer due to lack of finances and lack of facilities. The VIS has a number of highly qualified people involved in the areas of

sports medicine, sports science, game analysis, sports psychology, strength and conditioning etc... The program that Gary Cole and I will put into place at the Melbourne Victory will be very similar, and I've been running that type of program for many years now, and I don't see any difference with the boys being younger or older.

I know you're a modest man and don't like talking much about your UEFA coaching badge, but what advantage do you think that will give you ahead of local coaches?

The UEFA Pro-Licence gave me the opportunity to thoroughly develop my knowledge of the game and skills of the game in the formal aspect of the course. Informally, it was every bit as beneficial. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting and discussing aspects of the game with 18 coaches on the course, many of whom were very good.

I enjoyed sitting down and discussing management and how they dealt with situations strategically.

With a course like that you benefit not only from course content, but also the knowledge that you share on an informal basis. Some of the coaches were of a high standard, and some were terrific players in their day.

I spent a lot of time with the likes of Jimmy Nichol (who played for Manchester United then Rangers), David Moyes (who now manages Everton), and Jim Duffy (who was youth coach at Chelsea and is now first team manager at Dundee).

You must have a large shortlist of players that you're interested in signing. Any revelations possible?

I can't and won't reveal any of the players until they are signed. We're aiming to

target a strong Victorian flavour of high quality 18-23 year olds, which will be the bulk of the team. At the top end, we're aiming to sign some high quality experienced players, and in between, senior players who have either played NSL or are currently playing in the Victorian Premier League.

Of the players having signed for other A-League clubs already, who would have fit in to your plans?

I haven't looked at the other clubs in detail, but I have looked at some playing lists. Of the Victorian boys, there are a few that Gary and I would have probably made an offer to. Certainly there were a couple that interested us and I wish those boys well with their new clubs. Having said that, there's a huge talent pool in Victoria, of Victorians playing overseas, and other players in Australia, so at no stage did I think I was behind the 8-ball in signing players.



Does the Melbourne Victory need a marquee player? If it were in your plans, what sort of quality would you be chasing, and at what price?

I don't know if we need a marquee player per se, but we do need some very good players.

When I was at Sunshine George Cross, all the young players I signed eventually did well but they would have progressed more quickly with the assistance of some high quality players at the time.

The experienced players give them a lot of confidence and direction on the field. This time we have a budget and Gary Cole and I are looking at having 3 or 4 good quality players in the squad, and if one is a marquee player, then that's a bonus.

Do you have a long-serving assistant coach that you'd like to bring to the Melbourne Victory, or will the club appoint one independently?

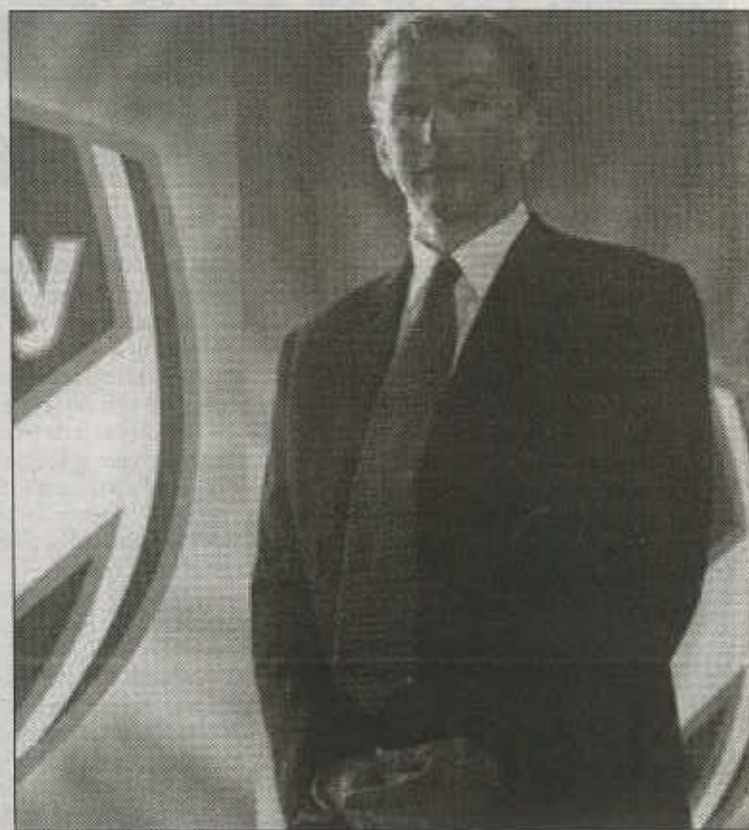
There's a process we're going to go through with Gary Cole and the Board to appoint hopefully, more than one assistant coach. Again, names will be revealed when they are signed.

Your tactics on the field will obviously depend on the players you bring in to the squad. What can Melbourne Victory fans expect from this new entity?

If you've seen the VIS play over the last few years, you would say we had a very attacking focus. Last year we (VIS) played regular midweek games against the Premier League teams.

The attacking mentality definitely cost us goals, but the team also scored plenty and played a very entertaining, aggressive and optimistic game. I know I can't be irresponsible with the Melbourne Victory team, but it will be much more attack than defence, and I nearly always play with three strikers.

How important is winning the pre-season tournament, and qualifying for not only the Oceania Club Championships, but also a healthy pay packet?



Ernie Merrick: Melbourne Victory coach looking for success in the A-League this season

Winning is always important, but there are degrees of importance. If we had a focus on winning the pre-season tournament, we'd have to spend more money on the experienced players and less on the developing future players.

Our focus is on longevity and not a huge early spending spree with short-term results in mind. We need a sustainable playing group that can stay together for a good period of time and get better results in the long term.

In which stadium would you like to see the Melbourne Victory play, and what kind of crowd numbers would you be realistically expecting in the first season?

I don't mind either of the stadiums that have been mentioned, but it's not my department so I can't say much.

Olympic Park and Telstra Dome have been seriously considered, as they are great stadiums with great playing surfaces, so from a coach's point of view I'd be happy with either of those. Any crowd initially of 10,000 or above would be terrific, but in future we'd be hoping to attract more by appealing to the broad spectrum of the whole Victorian community of 5 million people.

Your coaching experience at the VIS was not just on the pitch, but you also utilised some sophisticated computer analysis software to analyse tactics, health and performance. Has an agreement been made to utilise these resources or the State Soccer Centre in Northcote for the Melbourne Victory?

We're currently in negotiations with VIS, VSF and a top private school in Melbourne. The club's aim is to provide the Melbourne Victory players with the best possible training facilities and the best staff to assist with the team's and every individual's development.

That means monitoring health, and having sport scientists who can give information back about heart rate monitoring, good nutrition and hydration, and sport specific strength and conditioning programs.

The VIS has the best training facility in Australia, and would equal anything at the Australian Institute of Sport. We are in

negotiations to use those facilities and the staff there. We're also negotiating to use a private school's new pitches, and the State Soccer Center in Northcote, which has FIFA standard synthetic pitches with full floodlighting. Any player at the MVFC will enjoy coming to training and using these facilities, we see it as a major selling point for prospective players.

You must be delighted to work with an experienced former Socceroo in Gary Cole as Operations Manager?

I think I coached Gary for 2 weeks. Gary was departing Preston in the National League when I started at Preston. I've known Gary for at least 15 years. You're right, there couldn't be a better person to fill the role of Operations Manager.

He and I work very closely together. He was a fantastic soccer player, is an excellent coach, excellent manager, and most of all, he's a very good person. He's honest and is straight down the line, and I'm extremely lucky to be working so closely with someone like Gary. He's a huge asset for the club.

You have also been involved in coaching services for the Australian International Rules team and others. Are there transferable skills across codes that can assist a manager?

The beauty of working somewhere like the VIS is the sharing of information. If you look at the best performing teams in Australia, they all do similar things in their preparation.

For instance, the Australian Men's and Women's hockey teams are Olympic gold medalists, the Wallabies, the Australian Cricket team are the world's best, and many of these teams follow similar processes for team development. I've been involved in training International Rules goalkeepers, and Melbourne Storm kickers, and I enjoy working with elite sports people at any level.

Ernie, we wish you all the best for the inaugural A-League season, and for your time with the club.

Thank you very much and all the best.

This interview appears on the Official Melbourne Victory FC website (www.mvfc.com.au).

Ernie Merrick Profile

Name:	Ernie Merrick
Age:	51
Birthplace:	Edinburgh, Scotland.
Coaching qualifications	
1999 - 2001	UEFA Professional Licence Diploma
1996 - 1999	High performance coach award (Australian coaching council)
1995	Staff soccer coach instructor accreditation (ASA/VSF)
1975 - 1978	ASA Soccer coaching accreditation (Levels 1,2 and 3)
Previous coaching appointments	
1992 - 2004	Victorian Institute of Sport
1989 - 1991	Sunshine George Cross (NSL)
1987 - 1988	Preston Lions (NSL)
1986	Frankston Pines (Assistant Coach)
1979 - 1985	Doveton City (Player/Senior Coach)
Playing history	
1979 - 1985	Doveton City
1975 - 1978	Frankston City
1973 - 1975	Shettleston FC (Scottish Semi-professional League)

Hope Hearts fans understand Leicester decision

By Patrick Kisnorbo

Well, it's going to be a bittersweet six months ahead for me. It's old news now, but I will be playing for Leicester City next season after agreeing to a pre-contract this week.

It was a tough decision for myself. Particularly as I have made so many good friends at Hearts. The spirit in the dressing room is incredible and the memories of our European nights will stay with me forever.



Australian Patrick Kisnorbo will be looking forward to his career with English side Leicester City

I have to say, I don't think the decision would have been made so soon into the New Year if Craig Levein wasn't on the other end of the phone offering me a contract. Going to Leicester, I know I will be going to a similar atmosphere as Hearts, where the emphasis will be on team spirit and good coaching.

I just couldn't pass up the chance of being able to continue my career with Craig Levein and Peter Houston.

My best mate at Hearts, Mark de Vries, is also now at Leicester and that is obviously a

bonus as well.

I hope the Hearts fans understand the decision. I stayed away from the financial talk between my agents and the club, but I know Hearts have had some trouble with so many players coming out of contract.

I actually sacrificed my international career for the good of the club this season and the last, missing the Olympics in the process. That was a difficult experience as I copped a lot of stick back in Australia because of it. But I was doing the right thing by Hearts and I hope the fans can now understand my decision to sign the pre-contract with Leicester.

I was happy with my form on my comeback on Saturday in the Cup at Partick Thistle. The gaffer threw myself and Ramon Ferreira on with about 25 minutes to go and I thought we almost did enough to win it at the end.

Big Kevin McKenna had a great chance at the end, but my Aussie mate Adrian Madaschi got in the way and stopped the ball getting past the Jags keeper! Adrian carried off the MOM award for the game; good luck to him as he's coming back to his best form now.

The gaffer was disappointed with the result afterwards.

I know we're missing Mark de Vries, though I think we'll be getting a new striker in this month. We'll take the replay as we fancy ourselves against anyone at Tynecastle.

I was gutted to miss the Edinburgh derby last week, but we still have the League Cup semi against Motherwell, which will be a great occasion. In between now and the semi are some big games against Dundee United and Dundee. We really need to put together a decent run of results in the league to start climbing the table again.

Yes, there's been a few changes at the club over the last few days, but we're still by and large the same squad and are good enough to get back into UEFA Cup reckoning.

*Article courtesy of www.tribalfutbol.com

McKinna and Kosmina stand firm on local front

By Mark Stavroulakis

A-League coaches Lawrie McKinna and John Kosmina have been classed as a dying breed in Australia after being named the only managers to hail from the local scene of football in this nation.

The pair have been put into a category many rival Australian coaches would wish to be in after most of this season's A-League squads have opted to take the approach of hiring outside help.

Scotsman Lawrie McKinna has really changed things for the better since his arrival in Australia.

His first coaching stint in the now defunct National League with the Northern Spirit was seen as a god-sent for the club after taking the team into the top six for the first time in its club's history.

Implementing the role of youth players into the senior squad was what Lawrie did best and that is an act he will do once more with his new role as manager at the Central Coast Mariners.

Former Soccerroo striker John Kosmina meanwhile has been at the forefront in bringing back the good old days in South Australia with Adelaide United.

After spending great coaching seasons with the Newcastle Breakers and the Brisbane Strikers, 'Kossie' took it to the next level by taking Adelaide by storm in their first season during the last NSL year where the club broke all records on and off the pitch.

Regarded as a very hard-line coach, Kosmina also believes in nurturing youth stars but believes that Australia is currently lacking in the development department.

Both coaches though will be flying the local flag come mid-year when the A-League sets its sails for the first time.

Sydney FC have decided to go Dutch as Arie Haan looks set to take over the squad.

Perth Glory chairman Nick Tana, currently in England, is hoping to secure an overseas manager, while the Newcastle Jets hope to court former England coach Terry Venables.

Most pundits from these clubs believe that outside help is a must now that the league is heading towards a new direction.

Measures such as introducing overseas coaches in our new leagues is still an untapped method in this country so 'giving it a shot', will be what these A-League clubs will be looking



Flying the local coaching flag: Central Coast Mariners manager Lawrie McKinna and Adelaide United's John Kosmina

towards. It is true though that Australia does boast some really talented coaches, however the idea of locals learning off more experienced managers from overseas sounds like a productive method of nurturing our very own.

To see Jets' assistant Jean-Paul de Marigny learning off Venables, while Sydney FC's Ian Crook gaining tips from Haan will only further enhance their coaching abilities.

'JP' said it himself that hopefully having Venables would be beneficial to his coaching career.

"It's a really big boost if we do get Terry to this club.

It will be an absolute honour to be getting tips from this man who has done a fair bit in international football."

It is no secret that the A-League at the moment is currently being labelled as the old National League with 90% of the players from the last NSL being signed to new clubs.

We have yet to see the BIG player move to Australia, which is why a move for a high profile coach would only further entice such stars like Gianfranco Zola, Roberto Baggio, Teddy Sheringham and co to venture to the A-League.

Lazaridis hails Australian medical staff

Tana jets to England for Glory coach

Perth Glory chairman Nick Tana will jet to London inside the next fortnight to interview four coaching candidates.

Former Chelsea boss John Hollins has been linked with the post, being available after a short stint last year with Chinese Second Division club, Stockport Tiger Star (formerly Liaoning Tiger Star).

Tiger Star are a sister club of Stockport County, where Hollins was caretaker manager.

Hollins, who played for the Blues during the 1970s before joining Queens Park Rangers and later moving to Arsenal, returned to Stamford Bridge as manager in 1985. He has also managed QPR, Swansea, Rochdale and Stockport.

Tana says he has great respect for Australian coaches, but feels Glory needs a European coach to increase

awareness of the club in the Asian football market.

Former England international Terry Fenwick is also

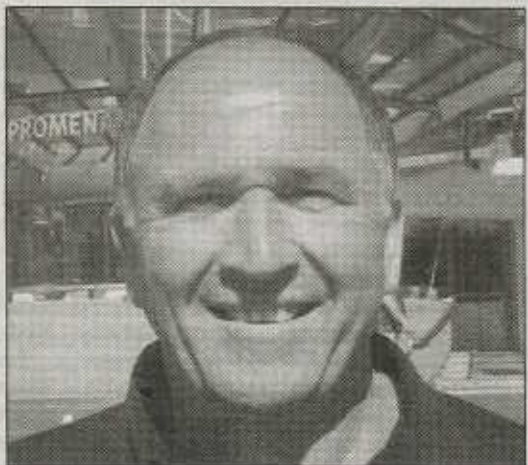
in the frame as is former Perth Glory coach and Iraqi National Team head honcho Bernd Stange.

After completing their major signing of Soccerroo midfielder Simon Colosimo last week, Tana was at ease to complete the important piece to Perth's jigsaw puzzle at the moment and that was securing a high class coach.

Perth are still on the hunt for seven players and it is rumoured that Travis Dodd is set to jump on the bandwagon at the Glory after his short stint in Greece with First Division outfit Panionios.

Dodd is locked in a battle with home town club Adelaide United.

Glory are expected to name their new coach at the end of the month.



Nick Tana: Glory chairman has flown to England to interview possible Glory coaches for the new A-League season



Anthony Crea pictured and Les Gellis have been praised by Soccerroo star Stan Lazaridis for their assistance in his troublesome thigh injury

Hampered by persistent thigh injury which has seen Soccerroo winger Stan Lazaridis spend more time off the pitch than on it has come a promising sign this week after the Birmingham City star explained his delight in his injury progress.

Lazaridis has praised the efforts of Soccerroo medical staff Anthony Crea and Les Gellis for helping the former West Adelaide star in his

recovery from a painful thigh injury.

Stan has been non-existent in Steve Bruce's squad this season so far but latest developments has seen the Soccerroo edge closer to full fitness.

"For the Aussie boys, having Les and Anthony based over here now is a godsend," he stated to 'The Age'.

"It proves that the (Football Federation Australia) board are determined to give us the best pos-

sible preparation for the World Cup, and I know how much it's appreciated.

"After a couple of seasons where I played maybe 90 per cent of the games, it's been frustrating that I've only played in maybe 14 or 15 of our 22 games. But the good thing is that when I have played, I think I've played quite well."

A former Marconi Stallions physiotherapist, Crea has done wonders with not just the Soccerroos squad but almost the entire Australian teams ranging from the Joeys to the Young Soccerroos.

After being sanctioned with a five-match suspension and fined 12,500 Euros for making an offensive gesture towards the substitutes' bench of the Serbia & Montenegro side during the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Crea has turned his back on this incident and got on with the prized job of keeping the Roos fit and well.

Just goes to show that not only do the Australians produce good coaches and players, but medical staff also.

Johnson completes Jets move

Newcastle United Jets has announced the acquisition of hard-working midfielder Richard Johnson, who returns home after 12 years of professional football in England.

The 30-year-old former Soccerroo negotiated an early release from his Queens Park Rangers contract to sign a one-year deal with the Jets.

"I felt the time was right for me to come home, and I have been keeping an eye on how things have been developing in Australian football and the vibe is good," Johnson said.

"Having my home town involved in the new competition was an added bonus. With my experience in England over the last 12 years, I know I have a lot to offer the club, and I will do my best to repay them for this great opportunity."

Johnson's former clubs include Watford - where he played 277 games, Northampton, Colchester, Stoke and Milton Keynes Dons.

Jets CEO George Liolio believes Johnson's signing is another positive sign for the A-League as the contingent of overseas-based Aussies

returning to play in the local competition continues to grow.

"I am very excited about Richard joining with Jets. These signings are so important to the appeal and vibrancy of the Hyundai A-League," Liolio said.



Richard Johnson: Former Soccerroo has completed his move to the Newcastle Jets

"Players like Richard who have played at the top level of international domestic football and come home to pass on that experience and professionalism really complements the talent currently

playing in Australia."

Johnson is joined by Franco Parisi and Matthew Thompson as the Jets' new acquisitions.

It is believed that possible Jets coach Terry Venables, who is set to touchdown in Australia at the end of

Haan the way to go for Sydney FC

Sydney FC's determination to appoint a high-profile foreign coach - for a hefty sum - has left a bitter taste in the mouth of overlooked well-credentialed local candidates.

The A-League club is expected to confirm Dutchman Arie Haan as its inaugural head coach later this month in a reported \$800,000 a year deal - although former Aston Villa and Derby boss John Gregory is also in the running.

Haan was sacked as China's national team coach after failing to get the Asian giant into the final stage of World Cup qualifying for Germany 2006.

"Fans don't pay to see somebody sit on the bench, they want to see talent on the pitch," Branko Culina told the *Daily Telegraph*.

"Spending money on players is always a better option. What happens if somebody like Arie Haan comes and the team doesn't do well? Will they then look at the quality of the players?"

Culina - currently technical director at Soccer NSW - is one of a handful of local coaches that have missed out on an A-League coaching job.

Another is Nick Theodorakopoulos, who won a national title with Wollongong Wolves and led Parramatta Power to the NSL

grand final last year.

"Ninety-two per cent of the players in the new competition are survivors of the old NSL while coaching figures are a lot less than that," he said.

"There's certainly an imbalance. I believe I still have a lot to offer along with a lot of the other home-grown coaches."

Sydney FC part-owner Peter Turnbull has defended his franchise's 'foreign policy'.

"We're following the creed of doing things differently and making a fresh start," he explained.

"Our persistence in finding the best coach - no matter where he comes from - shows



Sydney FC's well travelled coach Arie Haan

our support for players. This is a world game, when we go outside Sydney to look for talent everybody picks on us."

Philippine striker for Queensland?

Philippines national team striker Freddy Gonzalez will be on trial with Queensland Lions this week as coach Miron Bleiberg examines his import options, reports the *Courier Mail*.

A former United States college player, 26-year-old

Gonzalez has also played professionally in France and more recently been playing in the ever-improving Vietnamese league.

Veteran South Korean World Cup players Seo Jung-Won and Kim Tae-Yong are also expected to be in Brisbane this month as Bleiberg looks to

add some experience to his 20-man squad for the inaugural A-League competition.

In the coming months, the Lions will change its name - to avoid a clash with AFL's Brisbane Lions, design a new logo and unveil its playing strip.

The Lions have so far signed

Michael Baird, Royce Brownlie, Karl Dodd, Chad Gibson, Scott Higgins, Jordan and Tyler Simpson and final Tom Willis.

It is also speculated that former Brisbane Strikers coach Stuart McLaren is set to sign for the club in the coming week.

SERMANNI PICKS HIS PLAYERS

Thirty-one players will attend the first selection camp under newly-appointed Australian Women's National Coach Tom Sermanni, that commenced last Thursday at the Australian Institute of Sport.

The players will be competing for a berth in the Matildas squad for the upcoming Four Nation Women's Tournament in China, where the Australians will face world number one Germany, and big names China and Russia.

Ranked 15th on the FIFA Women's World Ranking, the Matildas enter a new era at the beginning of this new Olympiad.

It will be an important first-up look at the current talent for Sermanni, who returns to the position he held during the period of 1994-1996.

The squad to tour China will be announced towards the conclusion of the 12-day camp, and will depart directly for the event from Canberra. At a later stage, the next batch of AIS scholarships will also be awarded.

Fifteen of the Athens Olympic Games team will be amongst the group in Canberra, plus the four 'alternates' that narrowly missed the cut on that occasion.

Given the chance to fight their way back in to the national team are former Olympians Kelly

Golebiowski, Alicia Ferguson, and Kate McShea.

McShea last played at the Olympic qualifiers early in 2004, whilst Golebiowski's last match was at the 2003 Women's World Cup. Ferguson last wore the green and gold in the 2001 Australia Cup.

Rewarded with their first ever opportunity at a senior national camp are five players - Young Matildas Collette McCallum and Kim Carroll, 2002 youth international Jessica Mitchell, and goalkeepers Dmitra Poulos and Emma Wirkus.

Also hoping to win their first ever senior selection for Australia are Young Matildas Emma Davison

and Catherine Cannuli, plus Luisa Marzotto (former youth international), and Joanne Burgess.

Four of the players have previously played senior international football under Sermanni - Cheryl Salisbury, Dianne Alagich, Joanne Peters, and Golebiowski.

Salisbury and Peters also played for New York Power in the WUSA professional league with Sermanni at the helm in 2003, whilst Alagich was with San Jose CyberRays when Sermanni was assistant coach in 2001/2002.

Sermanni stressed the significance of these first few days together with the players.

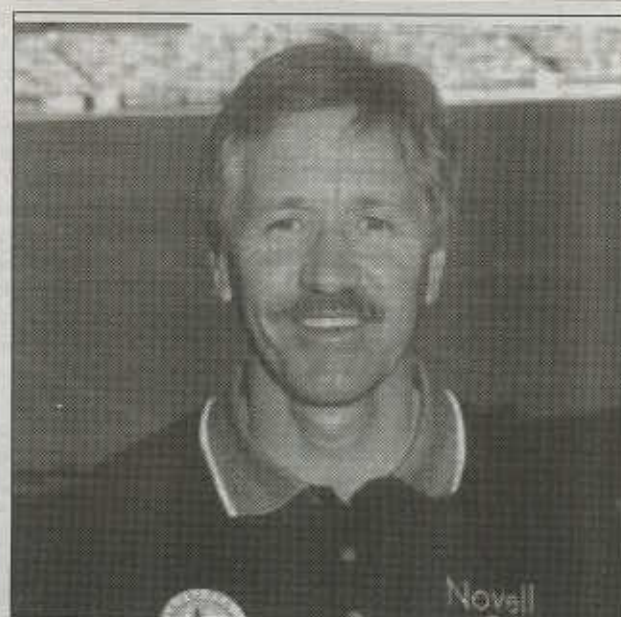
"It's very important I get an

impression of the players. Many of them I don't know at all or I don't know much about," he said.

"Even the players I saw as younger players are now mature players, so this camp is important for me to gain a close assessment of them all. What's important for me is to see the players play and assess what qualities they have - to see what I like and what needs to be improved."

"Then, being able to go straight into the China tournament is also good for me to see them play in tough international competition. For that to happen this early in my tenure is a real bonus for me."

This will be the first time



Tom Sermanni has selected a new batch of hopeful Matildas stars

Australia has competed in China's prestigious annual Four Nation Women's Tournament, to which an invitation is usually reserved for the world's absolute best teams.

The round-robin event will be staged in Quanzhou in the coastal Fujian province from January 28 to February 1.

Host China, currently ranked 6th in the world, is in the midst of a crucial rebuilding program with the aim of returning to former glories

in time for the 2007 Women's World Cup and 2008 Olympic Games, both to be hosted in China.

Germany is presently enjoying their current status as the top ranked nation in the world, champions of both the 2003 Women's World Cup and the recent U19 Women's World Championship.

Russia is ranked 12th and reached the quarter-finals of the last two Women's World Cups.

The 31 players for the camp between January 13 and 24 is:

Dianne ALAGICH - Defender (54 caps)
Melissa BARBIERI - GK (16 caps)
Leah BLAYNEY - Midfielder (5 caps)
Joanne BURGESS - Midfielder (uncapped)
Catherine CANNULI - Forward (uncapped)
Kim CARROLL - Defender (uncapped)
Rhian DAVIES - Defender (37 caps)
Emma DAVISON - D (uncapped)
Lisa DE VANNA - Forward (10 caps)
Alicia FERGUSON - Forward (33 caps)
Gillian FOSTER - Midfielder (36 caps)
Heather GARRIOCK - Midfielder (53 caps)
Kathryn GILL - Forward (5 caps)
Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI - Forward (62 caps)
Lana HARCH - Midfielder (3 caps)

Cassandra KELL - GK (23 caps)
Selin KURALAY - Forward (10 caps)
Kylie LEDBROOK - Midfielder (5 caps)
Luisa MARZOTTO - GK (uncapped)
Collette MCCALLUM - Midfielder (uncapped)
Kate MCSHEA - Defender (21 caps)
Jessica MITCHELL - Forward (uncapped)
Joanne PETERS - Midfielder (68 caps)
Dmitra POULOS - GK (uncapped)
Karla REUTER - Defender (15 caps)
Cheryl SALISBURY - Defender (101 caps)
Sally SHIPARD - Midfielder (5 caps)
Thea SLATYER - Defender (16 caps)
Amy TAYLOR - Defender (24 caps)
Sarah WALSH - Forward (11 caps)
Emma WIRKUS - GK (uncapped)



MORIENTES MOVES TO MERSEYSIDE

Spanish international Fernando Morientes is on his way to English Premier League giant Liverpool.

One of Europe's leading strikers last season while on loan to Champions League finalist Monaco, the 28-year-old Morientes has been pushing for a move to join the Reds' former Valencia coach Rafael Benítez at Anfield.

"Real Madrid and Liverpool have reached an agreement for the transfer of Fernando Morientes to the English club for a total price of 9 million euros," Real Madrid said in a statement.

Morientes claimed three Champions League winner's medals while at Madrid, which he joined from Real Zaragoza in 1997.



Fernando Morientes is hoping to settle down in Liverpool after recent stints with Monaco and Real Madrid

RIVER BLUE FACED OVER BOCA JERSEY

Boca Juniors have raised eyebrows in Argentina by unveiling a new shirt with an almost identical design to arch-rivals River Plate.

The new kit consists of a yellow diagonal stripe on a blue background instead of the usual horizontal hoop.

River use a red diagonal stripe on white background, a design which they say is unchanged since 1901.

Boca president Mauricio Macri said the diagonal stripe, based on a design dating back to 1907, would only be used in this month's pre-season tournaments.

"Now, everyone's going to know about other shirts in the club's history, their changes and evolutions," he said. "We have to accept it because we are remembering our history."

River Plate director Mario Israel retorted: "They know what's good for them at Boca. River would never use a shirt with a horizontal stripe."

LEAGUE CUP TIES EVENLY POISED

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard has told his team-mates they must raise their game if they are to complete a League Cup semi-final win against Watford.

Gerrard's 56th minute deflected strike gave Liverpool a slender 1-0 win in their first leg tie at Anfield.

But Watford, 16th in the Championship, have already knocked Premiership duo Southampton and Portsmouth out of the League Cup this season and will fancy their chances come the second leg at Vicarage Road on January 25.

Manchester United restored some of their battered pride as they held rampant Premier League leaders Chelsea to a 0-0 draw at Stamford Bridge.

Wayne Rooney twice went close to giving United the lead in a pulsating first half but it was Chelsea, missing suspended Dutch winger Arjen Robben, who carved out the best chances with dangerous forward Damien Duff and midfielder Joe Cole in form.

The final few minutes were punctuated by



Watford midfielder Gavin Mahon (left) watches as Liverpool captain prepares to shoot on goal.

an ugly melee near the touchline but Ferguson's men will be the happier and will be slight favourites to go through in the second leg on January 26.

The final will be at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on February 27.

FAVOURITES

ADVANCE IN COPPA



AC Milan's defender Japp Stam (left) challenges for the ball with Palermo's Mariano Nicolas Gonzalez.

AC Milan and Inter Milan reached the quarter-finals of the Italian Cup with minimum fuss.

AC Milan beat Palermo 2-0 at home to seal a 4-1 aggregate win, while their city neighbours and co-tenants Inter Milan came from behind to win 3-1 at Bologna and clinch a 6-2 aggregate win.

At the San Siro, Christian Brocchi opened the scoring for AC Milan with a fierce shot in the 19th minute and Jon Dahl Tomasson grabbed the second, converting the penalty after he had been brought down in the box by Christian Terlizzi 13 minutes from time.

AC Milan will meet Udinese, who despite losing their second leg clash 3-4 to

Lecce, won on penalties after the scores were locked at 8-8 on aggregate.

Nigerian striker Obafemi Martins scored a superb second-half hat-trick as Inter Milan made light work of Bologna.

The speedy 20-year-old forward struck twice from close range before rounding off the scoring with a stunning drive that flew into the top corner of the net.

Inter trailed at half-time to a goal from Jonathan Binotto, who seized on a defensive error by Dejan Stankovic to slot home with ease.

Inter will play Atalanta, who tore up the form book to dump Serie A leaders Juventus after drawing 3-3 at Turin's Stadio delle Alpi to seal a 5-3 aggregate win.

Sampdoria reached the last eight despite suffering a 2-1 home defeat to second division side Torino, the 2-0 first leg victory for the Genoa side proving enough.

Fiorentina advanced after comfortably winning 3-0 away to Parma.

Three second half goals gave the Florence club a resounding victory in Emilia Romagna to complete an emphatic 5-0 aggregate win.

Becks admires Mourinho

Real Madrid star David Beckham has admitted he'd like to play for Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho.

Beckham said: "I am happy in Spain but Mourinho is a man players want to play for - just like Vanderlei Luxemburgo at Real Madrid."

He also admitted: "He gains respect because he works the players hard and if you are not doing it he lets you know."

"That is what Mourinho is like. He is a manager who players want to play for and that is what you need at a big club, like the manager at Real Madrid."



David Beckham: Has earned a lot of respect for Jose Mourinho

JUVE SIGN DISCARDED MUTU

Adrian Mutu, sacked by Chelsea for using cocaine, has signed a five year contract with Juventus.

The Romanian international striker was released by the Premiership leaders in October after testing positive for the recreational drug.

He was then handed a seven month ban by the English Football Association which means he will not be free to play for his new club until the worldwide suspension ends on May 18.

Mutu could return to action at a potentially crucial time of the season as after that day Juve will still have two Serie A matches left to play.

Fabio Capello's side could also be involved in the Champions League should they reach the final, which will be played on May 25.

Mutu, 26, is returning to Italy after stints with Inter

Milan and Parma before his unhappy move to the Premiership, which ended with his sacking for gross misconduct by Chelsea.

Since his ban Mutu has been training with another former club, Dinamo Bucharest.

MEANWHILE Primera Liga strugglers Real Mallorca have agreed to sign Juventus defender Mark Iuliano.

The 31-year-old former Italy international has won four league titles since joining the Serie A side in 1996.

The Italian will be the fourth player to join the islanders in the January transfer window.

Argentine forward Bernardo Romeo, Japan striker Yoshito Okubo and Uruguayan midfielder Gonzalo de los Santos have signed loan deals with the club who are 19th in the 20-strong Primera Liga.



Former Chelsea striker Adrian Mutu has signed for Juventus but will have to wait until May before making his debut.



English Premier League



ASTON VILLA 3
NORWICH 0

Villa bounced back from last week's FA Cup exit to second division Sheffield United with a comfortable defeat of relegation-threatened Norwich.

Liam Ridgwell opened the scoring after nine minutes and Lee Hendrie punished some slack City marking to double Villa's lead after a pass by Juan Pablo Angel.

Villa had only scored once in their previous five league games, but Nolberto Solano gave the home fans a rare goal feast with a late diving header.

BOLTON 1
ARSENAL 0

Arsenal's title hopes look in tatters after a below-par performance at the Reebok Stadium cost them their third defeat of the season.

Greek midfielder Stelios Giannakopoulos met a superb cross from El-Hadji Diouf to head the game's only goal four minutes after the break.

CHARLTON 3
BIRMINGHAM CITY 1

Charlton took the lead after nine minutes when Talal El Karkouri's harmless looking floated free kick evaded everybody in the area and bounced past a statuesque City keeper Maik Taylor.

City replied 10 minutes into the second half when Mario Melchiot met a Darren Anderton corner with a thumping header.

But South African striker Shaun Bartlett swept home a Francis Jeffers cross and Danny Murphy added a late third to give erratic Charlton the points.

LIVERPOOL 0
MANCHESTER UTD 1

Ten-man United extended their unbeaten league run to 12 games after a blunder by Liverpool keeper Jerzy Dudek allowed teenage striker Wayne Rooney to claim the winner at Anfield.

Rooney's 25-metre shot in the 21st minute somehow got beneath the diving Pole and United could easily have been 2-0 up when skipper Roy Keane's superb shot beat Dudek but hit the crossbar.

United defender Wes Brown was red-carded on 65 minutes for a second bookable offence but a convincing United still kept Liverpool at bay.

MANCHESTER CITY 3
CRYSTAL PALACE 1

City raced into a two-goal lead by the 15th minute with Shaun Wright-Phillips and Robbie Fowler both on target.

The visitors, who are just one place above the drop zone, were given an unlikely lifeline before halftime when defender Darren Powell glanced in a header from a free kick.

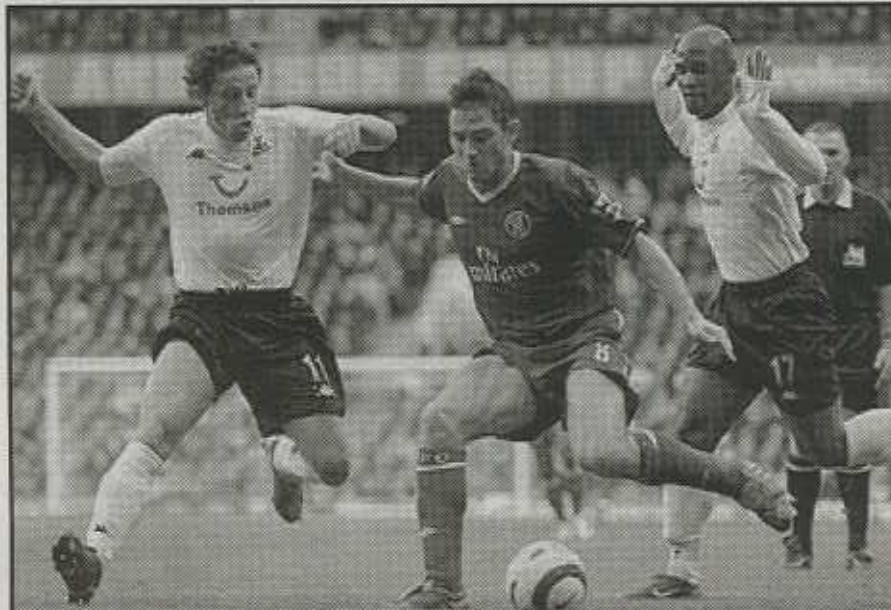
Livewire Wright-Phillips made sure of the points for Kevin Keegan's side in the dying minutes, turning in Fowler's pass for his 10th goal of the season.

NEWCASTLE UTD 2
SOUTHAMPTON 1

Aian Shearer marked his return from a 12-match injury lay-off by converting a ninth-minute penalty after Saints defender Callum Davenport pulled back Shola Ameobi.



Birmingham City's Marlo Melchiot (centre) rises over Charlton's defenders to head home a goal during.



Chelsea's Frank Lampard (centre) is chased down by Tottenham's Michael Brown (left) and Noe Pamarot.

There was a double blow for Southampton as keeper Antti Niemi was injured in the lead-up to the penalty and was carried off on a stretcher with stud marks in his thigh.

Things got even worse for Southampton after 38 minutes when defender Titus Bramble made it 2-0, although Peter Crouch replied five minutes later.

PORTSMOUTH 0
BLACKBURN 1

Slowly-improving Rovers eased their relegation fears with three points against 10-man Pompey.

Following a drab first period the game came alive early in the second when Lomana LuaLua was red-carded for violent conduct after 51 minutes before Norwegian striker Morten Gamst Pedersen drilled in a shot from six metres.

Pompey were reduced to nine men in the last minute when Andy Faye saw red for a bad tackle on Rovers keeper Brad Friedel.

TOTTENHAM 0
CHELSEA 2

Leaders Chelsea ended a lively first half in front of a packed stadium thanks to Frank Lampard's 39th-minute penalty after Spurs skipper Ledley King had brought down Alexei Smertin.

Tottenham, unbeaten in eight league games but looking for their first league win over Chelsea for 15 years, struggled to unlock Chelsea's miserly defence after the break with Robbie Keane and Pedro Mendes wasting rare opportunities.

Lampard drove in a second goal in the final minute as Chelsea made it six league wins in a row without conceding a goal, a Premier League record.

FULHAM 0
WEST BROM 1

Papa Bouba Diop headed a stoppage-time winner for Fulham to increase the misery for West Brom manager Bryan Robson, who is still to win a league game since taking charge in November.

West Brom created plenty of chances at Craven Cottage but were punished for their lack of finishing power when Bouba Diop was left unmarked to connect with Mark Pembroke's corner.

Doubts have been raised on whether Robson will stay on with West Brom as the club has only recorded one win this season.

MIDDLESBROUGH 1
EVERTON 1

Middlesbrough missed the chance to put pressure on fourth-placed Everton after conceding a late equaliser at the Riverside Stadium.

Boudewijn Zenden put the hosts ahead after 26 minutes with a superb angled finish, but the visitors deservedly hit back 14 minutes from time when substitute Duncan Ferguson headed down a cross for Tim Cahill to slot home.



Liverpool's Jamie Carragher (left) tries to keep pace with Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo.

FA Cup Fourth Round

Derby v Watford/Fulham
Manchester Utd/Exeter v Middlesbrough
Cardiff/Blackburn v Colchester
Chelsea v Birmingham
West Ham v Sheff United
Oldham v Bolton
Arsenal v Wolves
Everton v Sunderland
Nottingham Forest v Peterborough
Brentford v Hartlepool/Boston
Reading/Swansea v Leicester/Blackpool
Burnley/Liverpool v Bournemouth
Southampton v Portsmouth
West Brom v Tottenham
Newcastle v Coventry
Charlton v Yeovil

Ties will be played on the weekend of 29 and 30 January

FIXTURES

Saturday, January 22, 2005

Southampton v Liverpool
Birmingham v Fulham
Chelsea v Portsmouth
Crystal Palace v Tottenham
Everton v Charlton
Man Utd v Aston Villa
Norwich v Middlesbrough
West Brom v Man City

Sunday, January 23, 2005

Arsenal v Newcastle

Monday, January 24, 2005

Blackburn v Bolton

PREMIER LEAGUE

Liverpool 0 Manchester Utd 1, Aston Villa 3 Norwich 0, Charlton 3 Birmingham 1, Manchester City 3 Crystal Palace 1, Newcastle Utd 2 Southampton 1, Portsmouth 0 Blackburn 1, Tottenham 0 Chelsea 2, Bolton 1 Arsenal 0, Middlesbrough 1 Everton 1, Fulham 1 West Bromwich 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	23	18	4	1	45	8	58
Arsenal	23	14	6	3	52	25	48
Man Utd	23	13	8	2	34	13	47
Everton	23	13	5	5	28	24	44
Liverpool	23	11	4	8	36	23	37
Middlesbrough	23	10	6	7	35	29	36
Charlton	23	10	4	9	27	33	34
Tottenham	23	9	6	8	29	23	33
Man City	23	8	7	8	30	24	31
Aston Villa	23	8	7	8	26	26	31
Bolton	23	8	6	9	30	31	30
Newcastle	23	7	8	8	35	40	29
Portsmouth	23	7	6	10	26	31	27
Birmingham	23	6	8	9	26	28	26
Fulham	23	7	4	12	29	39	25
Blackburn	23	5	10	8	21	33	25
Crystal Palace	23	4	6	13	24	37	18
Norwich	23	2	10	11	19	42	16
Southampton	23	2	9	12	23	39	15
West Brom	23	1	10	12	17	44	13

Football League Championship

QPR 1 Stoke 0, Burnley 0 Reading 0, Gillingham 1 Plymouth 0, Ipswich 3 Coventry 2, Leeds Utd 1 Cardiff 1, Notts Forest 1 Millwall 2, Preston NE 1 Leicester 1, Rotherham 0 Wigan 2, Sheffield Utd 1 Brighton & Hove 2, Watford 3 Crewe 1, Wolverhampton 4 West Ham 2, Derby 0 Sunderland 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ipswich	29	17	7	5	55	36	58
Wigan	29	16	8	5	51	20	56
Sunderland	29	16	5	8	42	26	53
Reading	29	14	7	8	36	26	49
Sheff Utd	29	13	9	7	39	36	48
Millwall	29	13	6	10	34	27	45
West Ham	29	13	6	10	39	37	45
Preston	29	12	7	10	39	40	43
Derby	29	12	6	11	39	37	42
Burnley	27	10	10	7	23	21	40
QPR	29	12	4	13	37	41	40
Crewe	28	11	6	11	49	49	39
Stoke	29	10	8	11	18	21	38
Leeds	29	9	10	10	34	32	37
Watford	29	8	12	9	34	32	36
Leicester	28	8	12	8	29	27	36
Brighton	29	10	6	13	24	36	36
Wolverhampton	29	8	11	10	40	40	35
Plymouth	29	9	6	14	33	40	33
Coventry	29	8	8	13	36	47	32
Cardiff	29	7	10	12	31	35	31
Gillingham	29	8	5	16	28	47	29
Notts Forest	29	5	9	15	28	45	24
Rotherham	29	3	10	16	22	42	19

Football League One

Barnsley 4 Huddersfield 2, Bournemouth 1 Sheffield Wed 1, Bristol 0 Bradford 0, Hull 2 Peterborough 2, Luton 3 Stockport 0, Milton Keynes 2 Colchester 0, Oldham 1 Doncaster 2, Port Vale 0 Brentford 1, Swindon 2 Blackpool 2, Torquay 1 Hartlepool 2, Walsall 3 Chesterfield 0, Wrexham 1 Tranmere 5.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Luton	27	17	6	4	51	28	57
Hull	27	18	3	6	55	35	57
Tranmere	28	15	7	6	47	35	52
Sheffield Wed	28	13	8	7	51	34	47
Hartlepool	27	14	4	9	47	38	46
Bristol City	28	11	11	6	48	35	44
Bournemouth	26	12	7	7	44	33	43
Brentford	27	13	4	10	32	36	43
Bradford	27	12	6	9	36	35	42
Doncaster	28	10	10	8	37	39	40
Swindon	28	11	6	11	44	41	39
Barnsley	27	9	10	8	41	34	37
Chesterfield	27	9	9	9	32	33	36
Huddersfield	28	9	8	11	42	41	35
Walsall	27	9	8	10	39	42	35
Oldham	27	9	6	12	40	42	33
Port Vale	28	10	2	16	30	41	32
Colchester	26	8	7	11	35	32	31
Torquay	28	6	9	13	32	47	27
Blackpool	27	6	8	13	33	41	26
Milton Keynes Dons	27	6	7	14	32	51	25
Peterborough	28	5	9	14	33	40	24
Wrexham	28	8	8	12	32	52	22
Stockport	27	4	5	18	29	57	17

ITALIAN



By Joe Russo in Viareggio, Italy

Italy to host Euro 2012? The interest is certainly there and the Italian authorities will be making a bid to stage the tournament. The last major tournament of course in Italy was the 1990 World Cup.

The infrastructure is already in place and given that Italy is one of the major football centres of Europe, it would be appropriate that they host the Euro 2012 championships. The last time they hosted the Euro championships was in 1980.

The problem with Italy of course will be in the detail of the organisation. Stadiums, roads, transport links etc are all fine but the ticket handling, security and marketing will all need to be worked on.

One still vividly recalls that at Italia 90 there were half full stadiums because the ticketing had become a fiasco. Furthermore, multi million dollar light rail links in Rome to the Olympic Stadium were never completed and now merely sit there covered in weeds.

The Coppa Italia quarter-final places were decided last week. Yawn – well that's what the rest of Italy does! No one is interested – spectators and clubs routinely ignore this tournament.

Clubs use it to rotate their bench players, spectators don't bother attending and television ratings are poor. This is definitely no FA Cup, no matter how hard the Italian Federation (FIGC) tries to make it so.

The Coppa Italia is a useless midweek tournament whereby the winner is absurdly allocated a UEFA Cup place. The FIGC should scrap that place and allocate it to a team that toils in the Serie A competition on a weekly basis.

The solution, as stated in Italian Affair many times, is to convert it to a youth, say Under 23, tournament. At least the young players would be willing to impress and therefore committed to the cause. The tournament's winner would be rewarded by the media exposure and publicity. There would be no need to offer a UEFA Cup place as an incentive for teams to take it seriously.

For what it's worth the quarter-finals this year will be as follows: Cagliari-Sampdoria, Inter-Atalanta, Roma-Fiorentina and Udinese-AC Milan. You see no fairy tale teams like the FA Cup in England.

They are all Serie A teams, most of whom will play in Europe anyway, who are not really interested. The Coppa Italia would never have say an equivalent match to non-league Exeter holding Man Utd to a 0-0 draw.

To reinforce the point about young players, Atalanta's Andrea Lazzari was the real star last week. This young and relatively unknown player scored a hat-trick against Juventus in his team's 3-3 draw.

Each time he scored he managed to reign in Juventus' one goal lead and equalise three times for his team. In the end Atalanta qualified over two legs over Juventus, albeit a relatively second-string Juve.

Lazzari only emphasises the point about the commitment of young players in this tournament and remember, according to reports, that he is certainly a name to look out for in the future.

On the subject of youth tournaments the Viareggio Coppa Carnevale officially kicks off next Monday. Representing Australia at this under 20 tournament will be A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers who will be in Group 1 and face in order: Catanzaro, Partizan Belgrade and Juventus. Good luck to the team.

ABSW will be closely monitoring the tournament here in Viareggio, with a particular eye on the progress of the A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers, for all our readers.

Adrian Mutu has signed some sort of pre-contractual agreement with Juventus. The talented former Chelsea and Parma player, who is currently serving a ban for cocaine use, is still high on a lot of Italian clubs' shopping lists for next season (Italian Affair last week). So what happens this week? Mutu signs with Juventus.

No one condones his use of drugs but talent wise this player has lots to burn. Like other players, such as Juan Veron and Hernan Crespo, he was enormously successful in Italy before transferring to England. However, for some reason the EPL didn't suit him.

Sydney readers can tune into 98.5 FM on Sunday nights at 10.00pm for all the latest soccer news from the local and overseas competitions. Yours truly, Joseph Carlucci, Stuart Jones, John Romeo, Robert Scarselletta and Mark Stavroulakis are part of the team.



Roma's Francesco Totti (right) reacts as he is tackled by Chievo's Marco Malag.

Andriy Shevchenko shown celebrating AC Milan's opening goal

CAGLIARI 1
JUVENTUS 1

Juventus's lead at the top was trimmed to two points when a late goal by Gianfranco Zola held them to a 1-1 draw at Cagliari.

In the 54th minute, Nedved took advantage of some confusion when the ball bounced loose in Cagliari's area to send over a cross that Brazilian midfielder Emerson headed in off the bar.

Two late Buffon saves to deny striker Antonio Langella seemed to have given Juve all three points, but with one minute of normal time remaining Stephen Appiah was caught in possession by Cagliari's Massimo Brambilla, who whipped in a cross for Zola to head into the net.

ATALANTA 1
SIENA 1

Sienna's experienced striker Enrico Chiesa rifled home the equaliser just before halftime, cancelling out Davide Sinigaglia's 19th minute volley for bottom club Atalanta as both sides settled for a draw in a relegation dog-fight.

CHIEVO 2
AS ROMA 2

Serie A's top scorer Vincenzo Montella scored twice as Roma came from behind to claim a point.

After 15 minutes play Sergio Pellissier latched on to a Roberto Baronio pass and fired Chievo into the lead. Simone Tiribocchi doubled the score five minutes later controlling a Pellissier cross before rifling home.

A stunned Roma poured forward and reduced the deficit on 34 minutes when Montella tapped home a Totti cross.

The comeback was complete eight minutes after the restart when Montella volleyed home his 16th goal of the season.

LAZIO 1
PALERMO 3

Palermo came from a goal down to earn an impressive win over in-form Lazio. Fabio Bazzani headed home a Fabio Liverani cross on 16 minutes but three minutes before halftime an unmarked Luca Toni nodded home an Eugenio Corini free kick for the equaliser.

After the restart Lazio came close to taking the lead but against the run of play it was Palermo who scored thanks to a stunning Lamberto Zauli volley on 66 minutes.

Toni made sure of the points a minute from time by tapping home a Mario Santana cross.

LIVORNO 3
MESSINA 1

After a scoreless first half, Livorno cut loose to give coach Roberto Donadoni a win in his first match in charge.

A brilliant long range effort from defender Luca Vigiani on 53 minutes broke the deadlock and four

minutes later Corrado Colombo struck from close range to make it 2-0.

After 75 minutes forward Igor Protti scored Livorno's third on the counter before Domenico Giampa's consolation goal for Messina three minutes later.

AC MILAN 3
UDINESE 1

Champions AC Milan kept the pressure on leaders Juventus but had to come from behind to beat third-placed Udinese at the San Siro.

Another upset seemed on the cards when in the ninth minute Antonio Di Natale unleashed a long-range shot that flew into the top corner of Dida's goal.

A defence-splitting pass by Brazilian midfielder Kaka allowed European Footballer of the Year Andriy Shevchenko to stab in a surprise equaliser for Milan.

Udinese midfielder Marek Jankulovski headed into his own net to give Milan the lead after 53 minutes and Kaka dribbled through the defence to add a third a minute before the end.

PARMA 2
LECCE 1

Alberto Gilardino struck deep in to injury time as Parma, who missed two first half penalties, escaped with a vital win against fellow strugglers Lecce.

Marco Bresciano gave Parma the lead eight minutes after the restart.

Eight minutes from time Lecce seemed to have earned a point when Mirko Vucinic headed home the equaliser but in the sixth minute of injury time Gilardino fired home the winner, lifting Parma up to third from bottom on 19 points.

In the first half, Gilardino had his 35th minute spot-kick saved by Vincenzo Sicignano and just before the interval Domenico Morfeo fired his second attempt over the crossbar.

SAMPDORIA 0
BOLOGNA 0

Sampdoria, looking to bounce back from last week's defeat by Inter Milan, created most of the chances but a rock-solid Bologna defence held firm, forcing the sides to settle for a share of the spoils.

Serie A Fixtures Sunday 23rd January (Round 20)

ATALANTA - LECCE
BRESCIA - JUVENTUS
CAGLIARI - BOLOGNA
CHIEVO - INTER
MILAN - LIVORNO
PALERMO - SIENA
PARMA - MESSINA
REGGINA - UDINESE
ROMA - FIORENTINA
SAMPDORIA - LAZIO

BRESCIA 1
FIORENTINA 1

Fiorentina went ahead through Italian international striker Fabrizio Miccoli, who broke the offside trap and chipped the advancing keeper in the 50th minute.

Just after the hour mark, keeper Cristiano Lupatelli spilled a shot by Brescia's Andrea Caracciolo into the path of midfielder Luigi Dipasquale who rolled the ball over the line.

REGGINA 0
INTER MILAN 0

Inter made a lively start and home keeper Nicola Pavarini had to be alert to beat away early efforts by striker Christian Vieri and midfielder Giorgios Karagounis.

The 68th-minute sending-off of Reggina midfielder Giuseppe Colucci for a clumsy tackle on Karagounis should have swung the match the visitors' way. Instead, it was Reggina who went closest to grabbing a winner when Giovanni Tedesco crashed a shot off the post from outside the area 15 minutes from time.

SERIE A

Brescia 1 Fiorentina 1, Reggina 0 Inter Milan 0, AC Milan 3 Udinese 1, Atalanta 1 Siena 1, Chievo 2 Roma 2, Lazio 1 Palermo 3, Livorno 3 Messina 1, Parma 2 Lecce 1, Sampdoria 0 Bologna 0, Cagliari 1 Juventus 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Juventus	19	13	5	1	34	11	44
2Milan	19	12	6	1	35	12	42
3Udinese	19	10	4	5	28	18	34
4Inter	19	6	13	0	38	26	31
5Palermo	19	7	7	5	19	13	28
6Sampdoria	19	8	4	7	19	15	28
7Roma	19	7	6	6	35	29	27
8Cagliari	19	7	5	7	27	32	26
9Reggina	19	6	6	7	16	20	24
10Livorno	19	6	5	8	23	27	23
11Lazio	19	6	5	8	26	29	23
12Fiorentina	19	5	8	6	19	22	23
13Lecce	19	5	7	7	35	38	22
14Bologna	19	5	6	8	19	20	21
15Messina	18	5	6	7	22	29	21
16Chievo	19	5	6	8	18	28	21
17Brescia	19	5	4	10	15	25	19
18Parma	19	4	7	8	20	31	19
19Siena	19	3	8	8	15	27	17
20Atalanta	18	1	8	9	14	25	11

SERIE B

Pescara 2 Triestina 1, Catanzaro 1 Ternana 4, Cesena 1 Catania 0, Empoli 0 Bari 0, Modena 0 Ascoli 1, Perugia 1 Albinoletta 0, Salernitana 1 Crotone 1, Torino 1 Treviso 2, Venezia 0 Genoa 3, Vicenza 1 Arezzo 1, Piacenza vs Verona - Tuesday AEDT.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1.Genoa	21	13	7	1	44	18	46
2.Perugia	21	11	6	4	31	18	39
3.Torino	21	11	4	6	27	19	37
4.Empoli	21	10	6	5	31	19	36
5.Verona	20	10	5	5	41	27	35
6.Ascoli	21	10	5	6	28	25	35
7.Treviso	21	9	5	7	26	25	32
8.Modena	21	9	3	9	23	24	30
9.Piacenza	20	9	2	9	27	29	29
10.Albinoletta	21	7	6	8	28	25	27
11.Ternana	21	7	6	8	22	24	27
12.Cesena	21	7	6	8	26	32	27
13.Arezzo	21	5	11	5	30	26	26
14.Vicenza	21	8	2	11	32	37	26
15.Catania	21	6	8	7	20	25	26
16.Bari	21	5	9	7	21	22	24
17.Triestina	21	6	6	9	24	30	24
18.Salernitana	21	6	5	10	28	36	23
19.Pescara	21	5	8	8	21	30	23
20.Crotone	21	5	7	9	23	28	22
21.Catanzaro	21	4	5	12	20	39	17
22.Venezia	21	3	6	12	15	30	15



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – First Knockout Stage

Real Madrid	vs	Juventus
Porto	vs	Inter Milan
Barcelona	vs	Chelsea
Werder Bremen	vs	Lyon
Liverpool	vs	Bayer Leverkusen
PSV Eindhoven	vs	AS Monaco
Manchester United	vs	AC Milan
Bayern Munich	vs	Arsenal

First Knockout Stage

First leg - February 22-23

Second leg - March 8-9

Note: Inter Milan will play the second leg of their tie on March 15.

Quarter-finals

First leg - April 5-6

Second leg - April 12-13

Semi-finals

First leg - April 26-27

Second leg - May 3-4

Final:

May 25, Istanbul

UEFA CUP

UEFA CUP – FIRST KNOCK-OUT STAGE

Graz AK vs	Middlesbrough
Heerenveen vs	Newcastle United
Basel vs	Lille
Parma vs	VfB Stuttgart
Sporting Lisbon vs	Feyenoord
Alemannia Aachen vs	AZ Alkmaar
Austria Vienna vs	Athletic Bilbao
Partizan Belgrade vs	Dnipro
Valencia vs	Steaua Bucharest
Ajax Amsterdam vs	AJ Auxerre
CSKA Moscow vs	Benfica
Fenerbahce vs	Real Zaragoza
Panathinaikos vs	Sevilla
Shakhtar Donetsk vs	Schalke 04
Olympiakos vs	Sochaux
Dynamo Kiev vs	Villarreal

First Knockout Stage

First leg - February 16-17

Second leg - February 24

Second Knockout Stage

First leg - March 10

Second leg - March 16-17

Quarter-finals

First leg - April 7

Second leg - April 14

Semi-finals

First leg - April 28

Second leg - May 5

Final

May 18, Lisbon

BELGIAN JUPILER LEAGUE

La Louviere 0 Charleroi 0, Anderlecht 2 Mouscron 0, Club Brugge 3 Beveren 1, G.Beerschot 0 Gent 0, Lokeren 4 Cercle Bruges 0, Mons-Bergen 4 Sint-Truiden 1, Genk 3 Brussels 1, Standard Liege 4 Lierse 1, Westerlo 2 Oostende 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Club Brugge	18	15	2	1	48	10	47
2Anderlecht	17	13	1	3	37	16	40
3Charleroi	18	10	4	4	26	19	34
4Standard	18	10	3	5	32	21	33
5Genk	18	9	6	3	26	18	33
6La Louviere	18	9	3	6	28	17	30

7AA Gent	17	9	3	5	26	22	30
8Westerlo	18	8	2	8	19	27	26
9Lokeren	18	7	5	6	22	21	26
10Lierse	18	7	3	8	32	32	24
11Beveren	18	6	4	8	24	25	22
12Mouscron	18	6	3	9	25	24	21
13Cercle	18	6	2	10	26	47	20
14Germinal	17	5	3	9	16	16	18
15Sint-Truiden	18	4	4	10	18	31	16
16Brussels	18	4	2	12	17	37	14
17Mons	17	2	3	12	18	35	9
18Oostende	18	1	5	12	15	37	8

DUTCH EREDIVISE

No matches played this week

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Alkmaar	17	13	3	1	44	12	42
2PSV	17	13	3	1	42	10	42
3Ajax	17	11	4	2	41	17	37
4Feyenoord	17	9	4	4	42	23	31
5Heerenveen	17	8	4	5	30	28	28
6Utrecht	17	8	4	5	23	19	28
7Vitesse	17	8	3	6	28	23	27
8Roda	17	7	5	5	32	26	26
9NAC	17	7	5	5	27	33	26
10Willem II	17	6	4	7	22	25	22
11Waalwijk	17	5	6	6	21	23	21
12Groningen	17	5	4	8	24	33	19
13Twente	17	5	3	9	19	25	18
14NEC	17	4	5	8	20	24	17
15Den Haag	17	4	3	10	21	28	15
16Den Bosch	17	2	3	12	10	43	9
17Roosendaal	17	2	2	13	17	45	8
18De Grfschap	17	1	5	11	17	43	8

FRENCH LIGUE 1

Auxerre 2 Sochaux 0, Ajaccio 1 Bastia 0, Bordeaux 1 Lille 3, Lens 0 Istres 1, Lyon 2 Metz 0, Monaco 5 Caen 2, Nantes 2 Rennes 0, Paris St Germain 0 Toulouse 0, Strasbourg 1 Saint-Etienne 1, Marseille 2 Nice 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Lyon	21	12	9	0	27	8	45
2Lille	21	11	6	4	27	14	39
3Monaco	21	9	9	3	30	20	36
4Auxerre	21	10	5	6	28	20	35
5Marseille	21	10	5	6	26	19	35
6Toulouse	21	8	8	5	23	17	32
7Bordeaux	21	5	13	3	25	16	28
8St Etienne	21	6	10	5	27	20	28
9PSG	21	6	10	5	23	22	28
10Sochaux	21	7	6	8	24	23	27
11Nice	21	6	8	7	27	30	26
12Rennes	21	7	5	9	20	25	26
13Metz	21	6	8	7	18	28	26
14Lens	21	5	10	6	21	21	25
15Nantes	21	5	7	9	18	22	22
16Strasbourg	21	4	8	9	19	28	20
17Caen	21	4	8	9	17	35	20
18Ajaccio	21	3	10	8	17	24	19
19Bastia	21	4	6	11	14	26	18
20Istres	21	2	9	10	11	24	15

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

No matches this week

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Bayern	17	10	4	3	33	20	34
2Schalke	17	11	1	5	26	21	34
3Stuttgart	17	9	4	4	32	19	31
4Wolfsburg	17	10	0	7	32	26	30
5Bremen	17	8	4	5	36	19	28
6Hertha	17	7	7	3	28	15	28
7Hannover	17	8	4	5	24	16	28
8Leverkusen	17	7	5	5	28	25	26
9Hamburg	17	8	1	8	30	25	25
10Arminia	17	7	3	7	19	23	24
11Mainz	17	6	4	7	24	27	22
12Nürnberg	17	5	6	6	28	26	21
13Kaislautern	17	6	3	8	22	26	21
14Dortmund	17	4	6	7	17	22	18
15Mön/bach	17	4	5	8	20	30	17
16Bochum	17	3	5	9	23	35	14
17Hansa	17	2	5	10	13	36	11
18Frelburg	17	2	5	10	14	38	11

HELLENIC NATIONAL LEAGUE

Apollon 2 AEK Athens 1, Egaleo 1 PAOK 1, Halkidona 0 Kerkyra 0, Panathinaikos 5 OFI Crete 1, Ergotelis 0 Panionios 3, Aris 2 Kallithea 2, Olympiakos 1 Iraklis 0, Xanthi vs Ionikos - Postponed.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1PAO	15	10	2	3	27	8	32
2Olympiacos	14	10	3	1	28	7	30
3AEK	15	8	6	1	22	11	30
4Xanthi	14	6	5	3	20	17	23
5Egaleo	15	4	9	2	14	12	21
6Halkidona	15	5	5	5	16	15	20
7OFI	15	5	4	6	22	23	19
8PAOK	15	5	4	6	21	23	19
9Kallithea	15	4	5	6	22	24	17
10Panionios	14	5	4	5	11	12	16
11Ionikos	14	4	3	7	10	19	15
12Aris	15	2	9	4	12	16	15
13Iraklis	15	4	3	8	13	19	15
14Ergotelis	15	4	2	9	13	26	14
15Kalamarias	15	3	4	8	12	23	13
16Kerkira	15	3	4	8	10	18	13

PORTUGUESE SUPER LIGA

Gulmaraes 1 Beira Mar 0, Academica Coimbra 0 Porto 0, Braga 0 Moreirense 0, Gil Vicente 0 Penafiel 1, Maritimo 2 Estoril 1, Rio Ave 2 Uniao Leiria 0, Nacional 3 Sporting Lisbon 2, Vitoria Setubal vs Belenenses - Tuesday AEDT.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Porto	17	8	7	2	22	10	31
2Sporting	17	9	4	4	37	23	31
3Benfica	17	9	4	4	28	18	31
4Braga	17	8	6	3	24	13	30
5Boavista	17	9	3	5	20	21	30
6Martimo	17	6	8	3	19	16	26
7Rio Ave	17	5	10	2	23	19	25
8Setbal	16	7	3	6	21	19	24
9Leiria	17	5	8	4	18	17	23
10Guimaraes	17	6	4	7	17	18	22
11Nacional	17	6	3	8	20	26	21
12Penafiel	17	6	2	9	18	30	20
13Gil Vicente	17	5	4	8	18	19	19
14Estoril	17	5	3	9	20	24	18
15Belenenses	16	5	3	8	25	24	18
16Moreirense	17	3	7	7	15	24	16
17Beira-Mar	17	3	5	9	19	34	14
18Academica	17	3	4	10	14	23	13

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

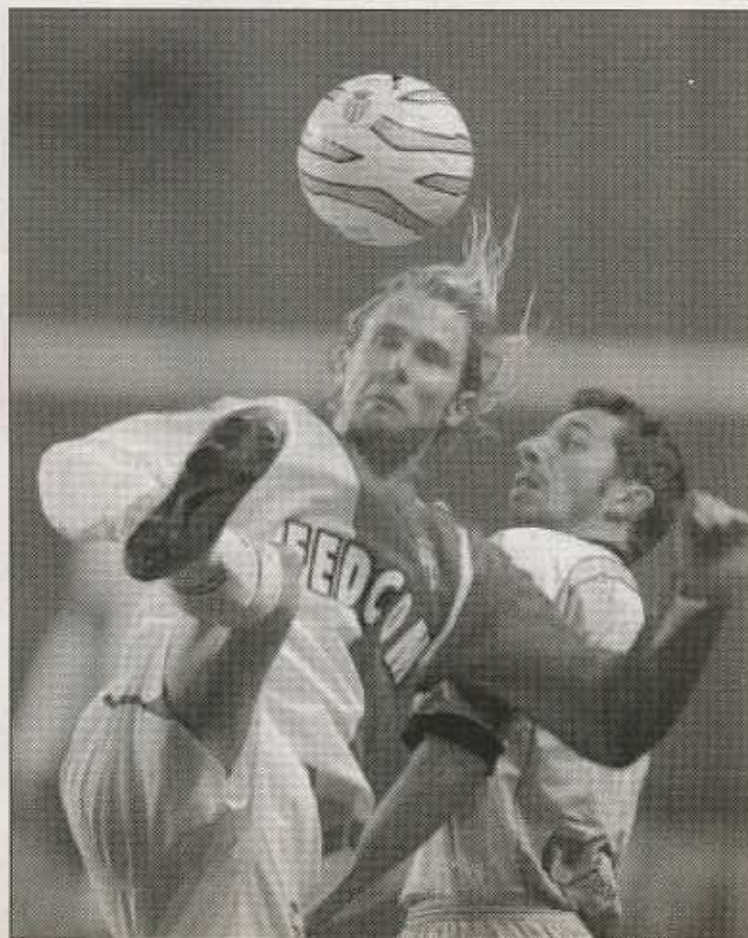
Dundee 3 Inverness CT 1, Hearts 3 Dundee Utd 2, Kilmarnock 2 Motherwell 0, Livingston 0 Hibernian 2, Rangers 3 Dunfermline 0, Aberdeen 0 Celtic 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	22	18	2	2	50	19	56
Rangers	22	16	5	1	46	10	53
Hibernian	22	12	4	6	38	29	40
Aberdeen	22	10	6	6	23	20	36
Hearts	21	8	7	6	23	19	31
Motherwell	22	9	3	10	28	29	30
Kilmarnock	22	5	2	11	31	36	29
Dunfermline	22	5	5	12	20	33	20
Inverness CT	22	4	7	11	21	34	19
Dundee	22	5	4	13	23	42	19
Dundee Utd	22	3	7	12	22	37	16
Livingston	21	4	4	13	17	34	16

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE 2

Cambridge 0 Chester 0, Cheltenham 4 Rushden & Diamonds 1, Leyton 1 Grimsby 2, Lincoln 1 Bristol 1, Macclesfield 2 Kidderminster 0, Northampton 1 Darlington 1, Oxford 2 Yeovil 1, Rochdale 1 Mansfield 1, Scunthorpe 3 Bury 2, Shrewsbury 0 Boston Utd 0, Southend 0 Notts County 0, Swansea 2 Wycombe 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yeovil	27	16	4	7	57	38	52
Scunthorpe	27	15	7	5	44	25	52
Swansea	27	15	4	8	37	24	49
Southend	28	13	6	9	40	34	45
Northampton	27	12	8	7	38	31	44
Darlington	28	11	8	9	34	31	41
Macclesfield	27	12	5	10	32	31	41
Boston Utd	27	10	10	7	36	29	40
Lincoln City	27	10	9	8	35	29	39
Leyton Orient	28	9	12	7	41	40	39
Bristol Rovers	28	8	13	7	31	28	37
Rochdale	26	10	7	9	31	30	37
Cheltenham	27	9	10	8	27	26	37
Grimsby	27	9	9	9	32	27	36
Mansfield	27	9	9	9	30	25	36
Wycombe	27	9	9	9	28	29	36
Oxford Utd	28	9	8	11	26	34	35
Bury	27	7	11	9	33	33	32
Chester	27	6	12	9	25	37	30
Notts County	26	7	8	11	26	32	29

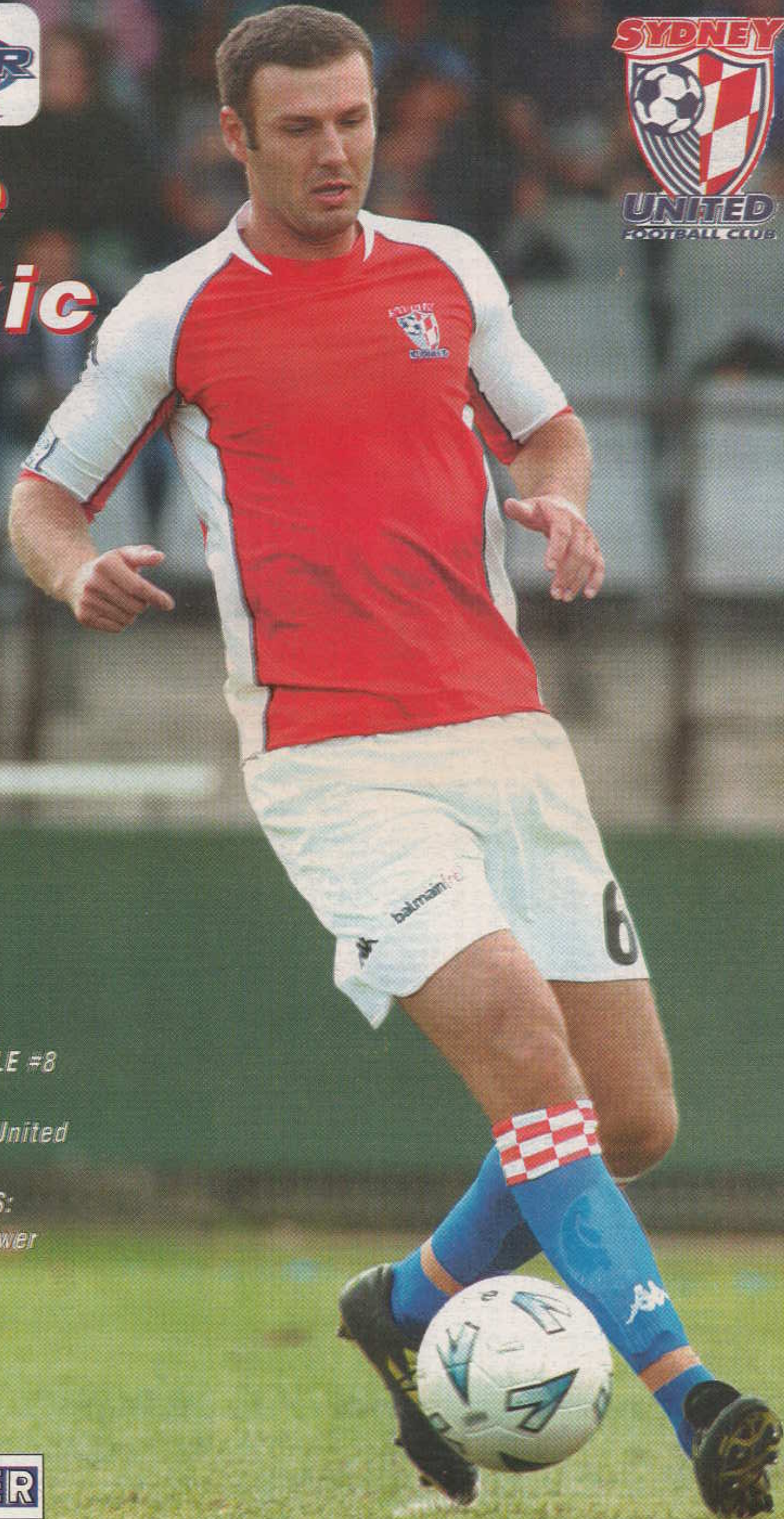


Monaco's Jaroslav Plasil (left) gets his foot to the ball ahead of Cyril Watier of Caen.

Shrewsbury	27	6	9	12	27	35	27
Rushden	28	5	10	13	24	39	25
Kidderminster	28	6	3	19	19	52	21



Joe Vrkic



PLAYER PROFILE #8

CLUB: Sydney United

PAGE: 28

FORMER CLUBS:

Parramatta Power



Image by Carlos Furtado